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EAST MOJAVE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

COMPLETED ORIGINAL

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East Mojave National Scenic Area

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District
Needles Resource Area

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CHAPTER 1-INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) describes the environmental consequences of implementing the proposed East Mojave National Scenic Area Management Plan. One alternative management program is also examined. By considering the impacts of the proposed plan and alternative, the EA fulfills the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. Additional site-specific EAs will be prepared prior to construction of individual development projects proposed by the plan. The East Mojave Management Plan and EA should be considered as supplements to the 1980 California Desert Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, which made the basic decisions on resource management and use allocations for the Scenic Area.

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The East Mojave region of the California Desert has received special management attention by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), culminating in the guidelines and actions established by the 1980 California Desert Conservation Area Plan for managing the area and its designation as a National Scenic Area. The Desert Plan, which still provides the primary guidance for management of uses and resources in the East Mojave, called for the preparation of more specific plans, many of which have now been completed. In 1985, the Bureau began work on a Recreation Management Plan for the East Mojave. Initially, this Plan was designed to consider primarily recreation. However, it soon became apparent during the early stages of the Plan's development that a full-scale review of all major uses and resources was in order. Subsequently, the Plan was broadened beyond recreation interests.

The East Mojave National Scenic Area Management Plan is designed to serve three primary purposes:

- summarize the management direction that has been established by the Desert Plan and subsequent activity plans;
- provide a Scenic Area-wide overview of adjustments that need to be made in current management direction; and,
- provide specific direction for the enhancement of visitor services and recreation opportunities.

The scope of the Plan includes the management of all resources and uses within the Scenic Area over the next ten years. By necessity, some major proposals will be discussed only briefly. In these instances, a site- specific project plan and Environmental Assessment will be prepared to provide the additional level of detail required.

Relatationship to Desert Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

The Desert Plan and accompanying Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), after a year-long public review process and consideration of several distinct alternatives, allocated resources or areas for various uses such as wilderness, grazing, crucial wildlife habitat, and utility line corridors. Throughout this planning process, the East Mojave region was acknowledged as a unique area of special significance in the California Desert Conservation Area.

The four Draft Desert Plan alternatives presented different mixes of the four multiple use classes described in Chapter 3 of this EA (controlled, limited, moderate and intensive use). The use alternative considered one area in the East Mojave for wilderness, a few areas for limited use, and the bulk of the area for moderate use. At the other extreme, the protection alternative considered wilderness designation for about 40% of the East Mojave, the remainder for moderate use, and a sub-alternative for National Park status based on criteria supplied by the National Park Service. Review of public comment on the Draft Desert Plan alternatives led to a "proposed plan" alternative which was also submitted for public review. The National Scenic Area designation was added in response to comments on the proposed plan alternative, and the present use allocations were approved for the East Mojave.

Issue Identification (Scoping)

The Council on Environmental Quality Regulations Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR Part 1501.7) and the BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.4-1) require an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action. Scoping, or issue analysis, determines in depth the scope and the significant issues to be analyzed in the EA, and identifies and eliminates from detailed study insignificant issues or issues addressed in earlier environmental review. Scoping thus reduces the length of the EA and emphasizes the real alternatives and impacts of importance to be discussed. Additional purposes of the scoping process are to inform affected Federal, State, and local agencies and other interested parties about the proposed project, and to identify existing environmental reports and information related to the impact assessment.

The scoping process for the East Mojave Management Plan involved discussions with the public and with resource specialists and managers of BLM and other relevant agencies. Comments were received and compiled as a result of news releases, mailings, and public meetings. This section outlines the steps taken by BLM for the scoping and public involvement process for the Management Plan and EA.

The first step in the development of the Plan was to identify the issues that needed to be resolved and the objectives for resolving these issues. Issues are the problems or concerns identified by the public or BLM which should and can be addressed through the Management Plan. The objectives are the guidance statements that direct the resolution of these issues through the planning process and are intended to focus the planning effort.

In 1985, BLM initiated efforts to determine what issues needed to be resolved in the East Mojave. An "ad hoc" committee was established with representation from San Bernardino County, the Sierra Club, California Association of Four Wheel Drive Vehicles, Friends of the Mojave Road, Citizens for Mojave National Park, local residents, mining interests, and wildlife/hunting interests. In several formal and informal gatherings, these individuals described what their different visions of the East Mojave's future were, and outlined ways they felt these visions could be achieved.

Issues derived from consultation with the "ad hoc" committee members were supplemented by other scoping efforts, including two detailed briefings before the California Desert District Advisory Council to which the public had been invited through press releases and publication of advance notice in the Federal Register; announcement in two issues of the Desert District's Planning Newsletter and other BLM Public Affairs bulletins; and a thorough review of opinion statements made in regional newspapers, journals, and newsletters. BLM personnel involved in the planning effort also discussed issues with representatives of companies or groups having a known interest in the Scenic Area's management. Of the eleven issues identified during the Plan's development, nine were selected for detailed analysis in the EA. The remainder were either incorporated as a part of other management issues, or dropped entirely from further environmental analysis.

Although there often was sharp disagreement over suggested ways of resolving issues, there was a striking consistency from all sources as to what the significant issues facing the East Mojave were. The major issues identified for analysis in the EA are presented here.

Issues Selected for Analysis

1. Impact on Recreation Management. The lands of the East Mojave National Scenic Area are used for sightseeing, hunting, rockhounding, camping, and other general recreation activities. Low use levels at present provide an opportunity for dispersed, unregulated recreation. As use levels increase, additional controls will need to be in place to maintain the quality of a visitor's experience. A demand for nonmotorized activities is not being addressed by current management, even though opportunities are outstanding in many areas of the East Mojave.

2. Impact on Motorized Vehicle Use. Motorized vehicle use is a major component of recreational activities in the Scenic Area. Most motorized vehicles are used to pursue other interests such as hiking and enjoyment of the area's scenery or historic resources, rather than as an activity unto itself. However, some motorized use is purely recreational and the demand for motorized recreational use is likely to increase. This use may adversely impact the Scenic Area's wildlife, cultural resources, scenic quality and soils. Additional attention is needed to protect these values and balance the protection of these values with the increasing demand for motorized recreational use.

3. Impact on Visual Resource Management. There is a demand in the East Mojave for resources or use opportunities which by nature are surface-disturbing, e.g., mining, off-highway vehicle use, and livestock grazing. Emphasis is needed to preserve the East Mojave's scenic integrity while allowing uses authorized by the Plan to continue, and recognizing the contribution made to the area's visual character by man's interaction with the environment.

4. Impact on Wilderness Values and Management. The East Mojave National Scenic Area contains Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) which comprise nearly 50 percent of the total Scenic Area. The wilderness values associated with each WSA could be adversely affected as use of the Scenic Area increases and more demand is placed on those WSAs. Special attention is needed to protect these values.

5. Impact on Archaeological and Historical Resources. A limited number of surveys have been completed for the East Mojave to determine the extent of the area's archaeological resources. These surveys have revealed rich cultural values which include temporary camps, pottery scatters, middens, rock art complexes, and burial sites. These values could be adversely impacted as user demands and visitor interest increase in the Scenic Area. There is a special need to complete surveys in areas of known cultural resource value and provide a higher level of monitoring and site protection.

6. Impact on Vegetation. Although no specific threats to significant species or communities were cited, there was concern expressed regarding the relationship between livestock grazing and the health of the Joshua tree forest on Cima Dome and vegetation cover on the Kelso Dunes. A second issue involved the ability of the East Mojave to provide firewood and other vegetation products on a sustained yield basis. The final major issue revolved around the encroachment of introduced species and the effects of human use on native vegetation, particularly in riparian areas.

7. Impact on Wildlife Habitat. In portions of the Scenic Area, projected levels of mineral exploration or motorized vehicle use may result in conflicts with wildlife. Special attention is needed to identify appropriate levels of use for these areas and restrict surface disturbing activities if necessary to avoid any disturbance of sensitive wildlife habitat.

8. Impact on Livestock Grazing. Nearly 90 percent of the East Mojave National Scenic Area is covered by grazing allotments. On an annual basis over 3,000 cattle graze on these lands. There is a need for more effective monitoring to determine if overgrazing is occurring. Additionally, as recreational use increases, vandalism to range improvements may intensify. Special attention is needed in selected areas to address these concerns, particularly the Mid Hills area, Cima Dome, the Granite Mountains, and Kelso Dunes.

9. Impact on Mineral Exploration and Development. Significant deposits of commercially valuable minerals or mineral materials are located in several areas of the East Mojave where other valuable resources occur, or outstanding use opportunities exist. There is a need to strike a balance between the national need for minerals, industry concerns regarding an

overregulated working environment, and resource values which conflict with mineral exploration and development activities.

10. Impact to/from Non-Mineral Development. To many members of the public consulted during the development of this Plan, the most serious threat facing the East Mojave is from development of private lands for residential or business use, and large-scale developments on public lands that would, over a several year period, adversely impact the area's natural resources. There was concern that such development would irretrievably alter the character of the East Mojave region in the same manner that the natural character of the "western" Mojave (the Victorville-Apple Valley area) has been changed by human use.

Issue Considered but Dropped from Further Analysis

1. Impact on Fire Management. Fire's importance in the workings of ecosystems has long been recognized. During the Management Plan's development, concerns were expressed that the Bureau's policy of "full" fire suppression could cause more resource damage than the fire itself. The Management Plan proposes to change this policy to emphasize "limited" fire suppression. This change will not restrict fire management efforts but will provide greater management flexibility, and therefore has been dropped from further analysis.

CHAPTER 2-PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVE

Development of the proposed management prescriptions was guided by requirements of the BLM planning regulations (43 CFR Part 1600) and the Desert Plan. The Proposed Action and No Action Alternative selected for analysis are briefly outlined below.

Alternative A - Proposed Action

The proposed Management Plan presents an overall strategy for utilizing limited funding to meet the challenges of management in the East Mojave through the late 1990s, within the framework of the Desert Plan. The Plan supplements, rather than replaces, the management guidelines established by the California Desert Plan for this area. The scope of the Plan includes the management of all resources and uses within the Scenic Area over the next ten years. A complete description of the Proposed Action can be found in Part Two of the Draft Plan.

Key features of the Proposed Action include:

- changing 120,000 acres from a "moderate" to "limited" multiple-use classification;
- acquisition of 149,000 acres of private/State lands in areas with valuable resources or recreation potential;
- withdrawal from the mining laws of 100,000 acres of public land with valuable cultural, vegetation, and recreation resources;
- elimination of the use of all-terrain vehicles;
- vehicle closures for ill-defined washes and short roads to minimize disturbance to resources or other uses;
- development of a network of maintained and unmaintained trails for hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking;
- establishment of a network of visitor contact stations, including Hole-in-the-Wall and Kelso Depot;
- designation of the Mojave Road as a National Recreation Trail;
- expansion of two campgrounds and designation of several camping areas;
- allowance of vehicle camping adjacent to roads instead of up to 300 feet from roads;
- designation of several "no shooting" zones to improve public safety;
- adoption of several measures to improve visual resource management;
- initiation of studies to improve the data base for cultural resources, and more effective monitoring;
- a detailed soils survey to enhance reclamation efforts for vegetation and improve range forage production;
- restoration of native vegetation at seeps and springs;
- introduction of bighorn sheep and Elf Owls into new areas;
- development of Habitat Management Plans for the desert tortoise;
- revisions in Allotment Management Plans to address concerns on possible impacts to wildlife habitat and vegetation;
- preparation of a "limited" fire suppression plan; and
- increases in monitoring to improve management of resources and their use.

Alternative B - No Action (No Change from Existing Management)

Under this alternative, BLM would manage the East Mojave National Scenic Area at the existing funding level with existing staff. Present management would continue. The California Desert Plan's elements and multiple-use class guidelines, together with measures proposed by other site-specific activity plans, would continue to guide future actions in this area. Current management is summarized in Part 2 of the draft Scenic Area plan.

State OHV Fund "green sticker" projects approved as of 1986 would be implemented. No overall facility development, operation, or maintenance strategy would be developed. No new sensitive resource baseline data or monitoring studies would be undertaken. WSAs would be monitored with monthly overflights and weekly Ranger patrols. Recreation use would be monitored occasionally as funds permitted.

Alternatives Considered but Dropped from Futher Analysis

Change Wilderness Suitability Recommendations

In this alternative, BLM would have reconsidered its recommendations for suitability/nonsuitability of the 23 WSAs in the East Mojave. During the scoping sessions for this Plan, the BLM's nonsuitable recommendation for the Clark Mountains (WSA 227), New York Mountains (WSA 265), and the Woods/Hackberry Mountains (WSA 271) was a focal point. The East Mojave Plan did not review these recommendations since wilderness values can be protected through implementation of the Clark and New York Mountain Management Plans, and by strict adherence to the Interim Management Policy guidelines. Congress will designate wilderness after review of information presented by BLM and the public. A formal change in recommendation at this time would significantly delay BLM's report to Congress.

Develop a Leasing System for All Minerals in the East Mojave

This alternative would have proposed a major change in how BLM manages mineral development on public lands in the East Mojave by replacing the current system based on private ownership of minerals with a leasable system where the Federal Government would retain ownership and require more diligent exploration or development to maintain claims. Although desirable from a number of viewpoints (additional revenues, more authority to protect resources), this Plan is recommending withdrawals for key areas that cannot be protected by current mineral regulations, since this type of administrative action can be accomplished through existing regulations and within a predictable period of time.

Sharply Curtail or Eliminate Grazing Over a Several-Year Period

Under this alternative, BLM would have phased out grazing over the next 10 to 20 years by not renewing leases, or renewing leases for a shorter period than the normal 10 years. It was rejected because benefits derived from continued grazing outweigh negative impacts at specific sites. Regular maintenance and/or the development of water supports wildlife in addition to range cattle. Structures such as rustic cattle fences or windmills add to the old-west character of the East Mojave and, for many visitors, enhance their experience. Negative impacts that result from cattle grazing, such as soil compaction or vegetation loss in areas of high cattle concentrations, can be dealt with through specific actions. The issues that were raised during the scoping period can be resolved by adjustments to grazing use; complete elimination is not needed.

Eliminate All Shooting Not Associated with Hunting

No-shooting zones would be established around all high-use areas as in the proposed plan, but target shooting, plinking, and other forms of firearm use not associated with hunting would have been completely eliminated, or else permitted in designated shooting areas. Firearm users would have to show a hunting license and be shooting "in season." This alternative was rejected to accommodate the large number of visitors who come to the East Mojave to pursue this activity, and to allow the agency to target its limited manpower to the areas most in need of controls to protect public safety. At some point in the future more restrictions may be required; the proposed monitoring program will allow BLM to develop controls as needed.

Acquire All Non-Federal Lands in the Scenic Area

Because of the high cost of exchange or purchase, existing developments on private lands, or lease agreements, BLM opted for a selective approach to land acquisition instead of pursuing a policy that would have eventually brought all private and State lands under Federal control. Some land uses or developments benefit the public by supplying services targeted to visitor needs. Under this alternative, BLM would have to develop an expensive concession management program to provide the same level of service currently available, and buy out some major developments at great public expense.

CHAPTER 3-AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

CHAPTER 3

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

This chapter briefly describes the resources that could be affected by the Proposed Action and alternative. A more detailed description of the resources in the study area may be found in Part 3 of the Management Plan, and other planning documents for the area. Copies of these documents may be reviewed in the Needles Resource Area or California Desert District Offices.

A brief summary is presented here in order to provide information essential to understanding the impacts of the Proposed Action discussed in Chapter 4.

Location and Setting

The East Mojave National Scenic Area covers approximately 1.5 million acres of public and private land in northeastern San Bernardino County, and is administered by BLM's Needles Resource Area as an integral part of the California Desert District. The center of the Scenic Area is 75 miles southwest of Las Vegas, Nevada; 60 miles northwest of Needles, California; and 90 miles east of Barstow. Primary access provided by I-15, I-40 and US 95 allows driving times from Los Angeles and Phoenix of five and six hours, respectively. Geographically, the "East" Mojave is actually in the south-central portion of the Mojave Desert, but occupies the easternmost portion of the Mojave Desert in California. (See Map 1-1 in the Management Plan.)

Climate

The East Mojave is semi-arid with annual rainfalls varying from four inches at lower elevations to over ten inches in the mountain areas. Most precipitation occurs from December through April but locally significant rainfall may also occur during July-August thunderstorms. Snowfall is fairly common above 4,000 feet. Precipitation is sporadic--some portions of the desert may experience drought-like conditions at the same time that other desert areas are receiving higher than normal rainfall.

Temperatures are extreme, ranging between 60 degrees and 100 degrees (F) or higher at low elevations in the summer to between 0 degrees and 70 degrees F in the winter. Daytime highs average between 50-60 degrees (F) from November through March.

Prevailing winds are westerly, with local variations brought on by the region's numerous mountain ranges. Strong winds can come up at any time of year but are most common in late fall and spring.

Land Status

Ownership of the East Mojave is shared among hundreds of organizations and individuals. BLM is the dominant member of this consortium, administering 86% of the land in the East Mojave, or 1,296,000 acres. The most significant private landowner is the Santa Fe-Pacific Realty Corporation with 6% (87,000 acres). Other private owners account for 4% (59,000 acres). The State controls the remaining 4% of the surface (58,000 acres), but also owns mineral rights on an additional 26,000 acres of private land.

The Desert Plan established "multiple use classes," or zones, for the California Desert. In the East Mojave, 21% (271,000 acres) are recommended for controlled use (i.e., wilderness designation). The limited use classification applies to 69%, or 884,000 acres; and moderate use applies to 10%, or 120,000 acres. The remaining 4,000 acres of public land are unclassified. These classifications do not apply to private lands. Appendix C of the Final Scenic Area plan contains a description of the management guidelines/restrictions which apply to each multiple use class.

Approximately 41,000 acres of BLM-administered lands in the East Mojave are segregated from mineral entry (that is, closed to the filing of new mining claims). In 1984, a withdrawal review led to an initial determination by the Bureau to rescind the majority of these segregations, an action which was appealed and enjoined until resolved by the courts.

Vegetation

The vegetative resources in the East Mojave area reflect the intermingling of three major North American Deserts: the Great Basin, Mojave, and Sonoran Deserts. The East Mojave is primarily in the Mojave Desert but contains floral and faunal elements of the Great Basin and Sonoran Deserts and some elements of the California Coastal and Arizona interior chaparral zones. The Mojave Desert is considered a unique floristic unit and is commonly designated a floristic province. Many plant species are found only within this area. Enclaves of flora characteristic of each of the surrounding provinces occur within the boundaries of the East Mojave area. Canyons of the New York Mountains have species of manzanita, California lilac, oak, and silk tassel which are characteristic of coastal California and the chaparral of Arizona. The Mid Hills have large stands of Great Basin sagebrush and Utah juniper. Sonoran species such as smoke tree and ocotillo are found extending a dozen or so miles into the southeast corner of the Scenic Area.

Of the 1,000 species of vascular plants estimated for the entire 25- million acre California Desert Conservation Area, 700 are recorded from the East Mojave. Approximately 60% of the Scenic Area is creosote bush scrub, 20% Joshua tree woodland, 15% pinon-juniper woodland, and 5% various other assemblages.

A number of sensitive plants occur in the East Mojave National Scenic Area. "Sensitive" plants are designated by BLM's California State Director and must meet at least one of the following criteria: (1) plants identified as candidates for listing as endangered or threatened by the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in a Federal Register Notice of Review; (2) plants that have been officially proposed for listing as endangered or threatened by the FWS in a Federal Register Notice; or (3) plants not meeting either of the above criteria but which have been designated as sensitive by the State Director.

There are six "sensitive" species known to occur in the East Mojave (listed below with a number identifying the criterion which led to their designation): Erigeron parishii--Parish's daisy (1); Eriogonum ericifolium var. Thornei--Thorne's buckwheat (1); Ferocactus acanthodes var. acanthodes--barrel cactus (1); Forsellesia pungens var. glabra--pungent forsellesia (3); Opuntia basilaris var. brachyclada-- little beavertail cactus (1); Penstemon stephensii--Stephen's beardtongue (1); Sphaeralcea rusbyi var. eremicola--Rusby's desert mallow (1).

Wildflower displays occur in the spring following wet, mild winters, and in late summer following the summer thunderstorms. Generally, the spring bloom is the most spectacular and draws many visitors to the desert. The Hole-in-the-Wall area, Lanfair Valley, and Kelso Dunes/Devil's Playground areas are good locations to view wildflower displays.

Wildlife

The intermingling of the three desert systems (Mojave, Sonoran and Great Basin) has produced about 35 wildlife habitat types. These diverse habitats support almost 300 species of wildlife. Thirty-six species of reptiles, 200 of birds, and 47 of mammals have been observed. Some of the more notable reptiles are the gila monster, desert tortoise, Mojave fringe-toed lizard, regal ring-necked snake, and desert striped whipsnake. Significant birds include the Prairie Falcon, Bendire's Thrasher, Crissal Thrasher, Gray Vireo, and Lucy's Warbler. The East Mojave has one of the finer bat faunas of the California Desert. There are also populations of rock squirrels in pinyon-juniper woodland, a relict population of dusky-footed woodrats, porcupines, and mountain lions.

Game species include the Mourning Dove, Gambel's Quail, and Chukar (an introduced species). Also introduced is a population of Rocky Mountain mule deer which annually attracts a large number of hunters to the Scenic Area. The State issues permits to operate trap lines on public lands. In the East Mojave, an average of 15 permits are issued each year, with coyotes (trapped year-round) and bobcats (trapped in fall and winter) being the most commonly taken animals.

There are five "sensitive" wildlife species in the East Mojave. The desert tortoise is fully protected under California law and may not be collected without a special permit. It is currently a candidate for listing on the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. In the East Mojave, the best desert tortoise habitat is in Ivanpah and Fenner Valleys, which have population densities in excess of 100 animals per square mile. Map 3-2 (Final Plan) shows the areas identified as "crucial" habitat, which are those areas deemed necessary to maintain a viable tortoise population (USDI: 1984).

The desert bighorn sheep currently is fully protected under State law, but legislation was recently approved allowing a very limited hunt beginning in the fall of 1987. Nine permits were issued for the Old Dad Mountain/Kelso Peak area in the East Mojave, and the Marble Mountains south of the Scenic Area for the 1987 season. There are approximately 550 to 600 desert bighorn in the East Mojave.

The Mohave tui chub is restricted to ponds at Soda Springs and two additional sites where they have been successfully introduced. A habitat management plan for this Federal and State listed endangered species was prepared by BLM in 1978 and revised in 1984. Much of the plan has been implemented, focusing on measures to maintain the chub's habitat and monitor water quality and quantity.

The banded gila monster has been observed infrequently in California--three of the five reported sightings have been in the East Mojave. The species is a candidate for listing on the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife.

The gilded northern flicker was recently listed by the State of California as an endangered species. In the East Mojave, this bird is found in the Joshua Tree woodland of Cima Dome.

Cultural Resources

The East Mojave contains some of the finest examples of cultural resources in the entire California Desert. These vary from an extensive concentration of rock art (including petroglyphs, or rock etchings; and pictographs, or rock painting) to a major segment of the historic Mojave Road.

Although numerous archaeological sites have been recorded in the East Mojave, they likely represent only a small portion of the area's cultural resource sites. An inventory conducted for the Desert Plan studied selected areas to determine sensitivity, but did not cover large enough areas to substantially add to the area's data base.

Archaeological localities of the East Mojave include: prehistoric villages with rock shelters, petroglyphs and pictographs, as well as quarries and high-density lithic scatters in the Providence Mountain area; the petroglyphs of the Woods Mountains, Cinder Cones, and Lanfair Valley; the large open sites, rockshelters, and pictographs of the Granite Mountains; the numerous clusters of fire-affected rocks with associated pottery, milling assemblage, and lithic tools associated with Pleistocene lake shores; the large roasting pits associated with the limestone formations of the Mescal Range and Clark Mountains; the extensive string of campsites, milling sites, and lithic scatters of the Piute Range; and the campsites and petroglyphs associated with the trails connecting the Colorado River with the Pacific Coast.

The historical features of the East Mojave include: the remains of one of the most desolate official U.S. Army camps in the west at Camp Rock Spring (1867); the late 1860's Army outposts and relay stations at Piute Creek (Fort Piute) and Marl Spring; the nationally significant Mojave Road (circa 1859-1883) linking the Pacific with the southwest; the 1880's mining townsite of Providence with the associated Bonanza King Mine; the 1890's town of Vanderbilt and the Boomerang Mine millsite; the townsites of Ivanpah and Lanfair; segments of two early transcontinental railroads-- the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad (1883), and the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroads (1905); several abandoned railways, including the Tonopah-Tidewater Railway and the Barnwell and Searchlight Railway (1907-1923); homesteading and small mining operations dating from about 1910 to 1925; and portions of Camp Clipper, a World War II desert training camp.

Wilderness

Nearly 50% of the Scenic Area meets the basic criteria for consideration as wilderness, resulting in the designation of 23 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) in the East Mojave. Total WSA acreage amounts to approximately 705,000 acres of public land. During the development of the Desert Plan, these areas were subject to intensive study. After an analysis of wilderness characteristics, other resources, existing or potential uses, and public comment, the Final Desert Plan recommended that seven WSAs totaling 271,000 acres of public land, or approximately 20% of the Scenic Area, were suitable for formal wilderness designation by Congress. The remaining 16 WSAs were recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness, or their wilderness quality was low compared to other WSAs being considered. To protect their primitive character, however, BLM recommended "limited use" designations and designated some as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern to emphasize resource protection of these nonsuitable areas. Table 3-3 of the Plan provides a listing of all Scenic Area WSAs, which are shown on Map 3-1.

Recreation

Over the past ten years, recreation use has been monitored by aerial surveys, visitor registers and Ranger patrol. Visitor use is also recorded at Providence Mountain State Recreation Area and on County-maintained roads. Current estimates (based on Ranger counts and records kept for Providence Mountain State Recreation Area) indicate the area receives 60,000 visits per year. Several areas within the Scenic Area received moderate to intensive use, including BLM's Hole-in-the-Wall and Mid Hills campgrounds, Mitchell Caverns, the Mojave Road, Rock Spring, Fort Piute, Kelso Dunes, Soda Springs, Devil's Playground, Clark and New York Mountains, and Wildhorse Canyon. Each of these areas receives more than 2,000 visits a year. Field observations indicate that most visitors stay for two or three days with overnight use increasing by approximately 5% each year. The number of day-use visitors has increased at an even faster rate. Within the ten-year period of this Plan, overall use levels are expected to rise to between 200,000 and 250,000 visits per year, primarily from increases in day use.

The eight months from October through May account for nearly 90% of the visits to the Scenic Area. The first two or three weekends of upland game and deer hunting seasons (October-November), and the three- and four-day holiday weekends from Thanksgiving through Easter are the most concentrated use periods, accounting for the majority of use for the entire year. The two weeks around Easter bring large numbers of university and college groups to the area for week-long stays. Organized group tours and outings also use the Easter period for visits. Very few recreation visits are made on weekdays. During the past few years, summer visitation has increased, particularly use by foreign visitors. Residents of bordering towns such as Needles, Bullhead City, and Laughlin seek the higher elevations of the East Mojave to escape the intense heat of the Colorado River Valley. As these cities increase in population, summer use of the Scenic Area will also rise.

The table below describes activities and the estimated percentage of visitors participating in each. In this list, off highway vehicle (OHV) exploring is considered a sightseeing activity, but also figures prominently in the use of the Mojave Road, and as an activity associated with nearly every other use. Totals are greater than 100% because most visitors participate in more than one activity.

Activity	Current Participation
Sightseeing	90%
Hunting	50%
Shooting/plinking	40%
Camping	70%
Nature study/research	30%
Hiking and backpacking	20%
Rock collecting	15%

Visual Resources

The scenic quality of the East Mojave does not reside in any particularly spectacular feature. There are more scenic mountains or sand dunes elsewhere. What makes this region stand out from the rest of the California Desert is the spectacular range of features: Joshua tree forests lying next to fields of ancient lava, which are only a few miles away from a sea of sand that is overlooked by mountains capped by sheer 500-foot limestone cliffs. Then there are the "long views," when one can step away from the edge of a road and see 50 miles into a desert that reveals only a hint of its past. These two elements--variety and the long distance view--are the most significant characteristics of the Scenic Area's visual quality.

Livestock Grazing

Eleven grazing allotments administered by the Needles Resource Area lie at least partially within the Scenic Area. These allotments cover 1,255,343 acres of Federal land in the East Mojave and provide approximately 35,503 active animal unit months (AUMs) and are outlined below:

Allotment	Total Acres	Acres in East Mojave
Clark Mountain	88,312	17,500
Colton Hills	147,827	140,000
Crescent Peak	31,780	31,780
Gold Valley	16,190	16,190
Granite Mountains	345,969	262,000
Kessler Spring	252,172	219,000
Lanfair Valley	339,553	225,000
Piute Valley	33,468	13,000
Round Valley	653	653
Valley View	281,802	268,000
Valley Wells	237,258	34,000

Grazing in the East Mojave takes place year-round. Most allotments are managed under rotation grazing systems, using range improvements such as fences and developed water sources, as well as placement of salt blocks to control distribution of cattle. Range improvements include fences, corrals, pipelines, wells, windmills, stock tanks, and spring developments that are cooperatively constructed by the rancher and BLM.

Air, Soils, and Water

Air

The East Mojave is located within the Southeast Desert Air Basin. Air quality is considered good to very good. With the exception of suspended articulates in the form of wind-blown dust, average annual values for the major pollutants in the Scenic Area rarely exceed Federal and State air quality standards. The area has been designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a Class II air management zone. This designation allows "moderate, well-controlled and sited industrial growth" to take place. The nearest air quality station, located in Barstow, is used to monitor the region for major pollutants.

Soils

Two soils inventories conducted in the East Mojave in 1976 encompassed nearly two million acres and provided BLM with soils information upon which to base future land use decisions. As many as 21 different types were identified in the East Mojave and are as diverse as the landforms from which they were born. Some of the many that are found include: soils with sandy textures containing gravel and cobbles; soils with medium textures; soils with calcium carbonate (caliche) accumulations; fine-textured soils found in playas; soils with a developed horizon indicating age or formation during a different moisture regime; shallow soils; and upland soils. Other soil types in places such as escarpments, rough broken land, ephemeral streams, dunes, and lava flow areas are also found.

Water

Over 200 springs and seeps have been identified in the East Mojave National Scenic Area. Many have been improved by the installation of retention dams, pipelines, and troughs for use by livestock. Most are also available for wildlife and burro use. Piute Creek is the only perennial stream in the East Mojave and is an important wildlife water source as well as a popular recreation site.

Water wells in the Scenic Area utilize ground water stored in aquifers. Each valley in the East Mojave can be expected to contain water, although the water quality, quantity, and depth to water vary considerably. Utilization of ground water resources is based on surface ownership; therefore, BLM has priority for uses of ground water underlying the public lands in California. A "Notice of Intent" to drill a water well is required and, if annual use exceeds 25 acre-feet/year, a special State permit is required.

Water wells have been drilled primarily for domestic use and livestock needs but a number of wells have also been drilled for mining use. Two wells, one at Mid Hills and another at Hole-in-the-Wall, supply water for visitor use at these two BLM campgrounds. Over 100 wildlife waters-- including big game guzzlers, wildlife drinkers and quail drinkers--have been jointly developed in the East Mojave by the California Department of Fish and Game, BLM, and volunteers.

Mineral and Energy Resources

The East Mojave is located at the southern end of the Basin and Range geomorphic province, and is characterized by block-fault mountain ranges separated by alluvium-filled valleys. A wide variety of sedimentary, metamorphic and igneous rocks outcrop in the mountain ranges within the boundary of the Scenic Area and create not only a scenic landscape, but also a highly mineralized one. Radiometric data show that the oldest known Precambrian rocks are about 1.7 billion years old, while charcoal associated with a young volcanic flow south of Halloran Springs dates back about 400 years.

The East Mojave is a repository of a wide variety of mineral resources, formed under a wide range of geologic environments. These environments include deposits formed by magmatic concentration, contact metasomatism, hydrothermal activity, volcanism, sedimentation, and supergene processes. Weathering and metamorphism played a role in the enrichment of many of the deposits to convert them into either viable mines or deposits of potential economic value.

Intensive mining activity occurred in the East Mojave between 1865 and 1892. Since 1892 mining in this area has been subject to cycles of prospecting and mineral extraction stimulated by completion of the Union Pacific Railroad in the early 1900's and fluctuations in prices for the mineral commodities. Over 200 mines have been active at one time or another in the Scenic Area. Metallic minerals that have been extracted in commercial quantities include gold, silver, copper, tungsten, lead, and zinc. Nonmetallic minerals include talc, clay, gypsum, volcanic cinders, and rare earth elements. (See Table 3-7, Mineral Occurrence in the Final Plan).

Oil and gas deposits may possibly occur here but there are no producing wells or fields at present. There is also limited potential for geothermal development but once again there is no activity in this area. However, significant portions of the East Mojave have been classified as "prospectively valuable" for these commodities.

There are several active mining operations at present, including gold mines (New Colosseum, Morningstar, Rattlesnake and Golden Quail mines), cinder mines, a sericite mine in the New York Mountains, and clay mines in the vicinity of Hart. Vanderbilt Mine, a former gold mine, is now a milling and ore processing site. The largest operation is the open pit New Colosseum Mine northeast of Clark Mountain. The Castle Mountain Project is another open pit mine which is scheduled to begin operations sometime in 1988.

The mineral industry has shown increasing interest in the Scenic Area's mineral resources over the past ten years. Including the claims with operating mines, this interest is represented by the location of over 10,000 mining claims, representing over 25% of all claims in San Bernardino County and 7% of the total claims in California. Approximately 60% of the claims in the East Mojave are lode or hardrock mineral claims. The remaining 40% are placer claims, generally located on alluvial deposits. Claims are scattered throughout the Scenic Area, but particularly heavy concentrations occur in the Providence, New York, and Clark Mountains, the Ivanpah/Mescal Range, and the Hart area.

Mineral interest is also represented by three oil and gas leases, free use permits and sales contracts for mineral materials (sand and gravel), and extensive use by hobby mineral collectors. Approximately 430,000 acres in the East Mojave have been leased in the recent past for potential oil and gas development, but only 5,838 acres are currently under lease.

Utilities

Utility Corridors

The Desert Plan identified 16 corridors in which major new utility lines could be constructed in the California Desert. Three, corridors BB, D, and E shown on Map 3-4, are within the Scenic Area. Corridor BB parallels I-15, passing through the Scenic Area for 30 miles. A 1986 Desert Plan Amendment relocated the portion of this corridor west of Cima Road out of the Scenic Area to a location north of I-15. A gas line and two transmission lines are completed or approved along this corridor. At least one fiber-optics line, and possibly more, will be constructed in the foreseeable future. Corridor D, located north of Clark Mountain, has four transmission lines and a buried fiber-optics line. No additional powerlines can be constructed within the corridor unless Wilderness Study Area constraints are lifted by Congress, but underground lines, including a proposed natural gas line, may still be built. Corridor E contains two transmission lines and forms the eastern boundary of the Scenic Area.

In addition to these planning corridors, the Desert Plan also established "contingent corridors" which can be developed further only after approval of a Desert Plan Amendment designating them as utility corridors. One, contingent corridor W, contains three transmission lines and traverses the East Mojave over Cima Dome and the Devil's Playground. Additional utility lines traverse the East Mojave, but are not in corridors that can be further developed. Map 3-4 identifies all designated planning and contingent corridors, and other major existing utility lines.

Communication Sites

Communication sites are scattered throughout the East Mojave's higher peaks and mountain passes. At present, there are seven commercial and/or public service sites located on public and private lands within the Scenic Area. In 1986, proposals for two additional sites were submitted to BLM and San Bernardino County to improve local telephone service. In addition to these sites, BLM maintains a solar-powered unit on Clark Mountain as part of a desert wide emergency radio net.

CHAPTER 4-ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

CHAPTER 4

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Alternative A - Proposed Action

Impacts on Recreation Management

The East Mojave's value for recreation lies in the diversity of settings and opportunities for dispersed recreational activities. Increases in use will require careful planning to anticipate needs for developments and controls so they can be in place at the right time. Although some proposals in this Plan call for restrictions or limitations on certain recreation activities, the overall impact on recreation use and management will be positive since the quality of experience will be maintained or improved for most activities.

Recreation use will benefit from land acquisition (Management Action A-2), mineral withdrawals (A-7), development of nonmotorized trails (B-5, 6), interpretive and informational developments (C-1 through C-10), designation of the Mojave Road and other interpreted trails (C-11, C-12), camping area improvements (C-13 through C-16), and controls on shooting (C-20). Overall benefit to recreation uses will also result from vehicle controls that will help preserve the East Mojave's recreational setting (B-1 through B-4).

Obtaining lands targeted for acquisition will guarantee public access, eliminate potential conflicts with landowners, and reduce the chance of incompatible private development. The recreation use areas deriving most benefit from land acquisition are the New York Mountains, Woods and Hackberry Mountains, Mojave Road, Mid Hills, and Clark Mountain. In cases where private lands cannot be acquired, access easements will be obtained (B-9). These proposals will benefit both motorized and nonmotorized recreational activities.

Some very important recreation sites will be included in areas recommended for new or continued withdrawal from mineral entry. Mid Hills and Hole-in-the-Wall campgrounds represent substantial investments of public funds, and are two of the most heavily used sites in the Scenic Area. The withdrawals for Kelso Dunes, Granite Mountains, Piute Creek, Caruthers Canyon, Cinder Cones, and Cima Dome are in areas which currently receive moderate to high levels of visitor use, and are proposed for additional recreational development. Withdrawal from mineral entry will ensure retention under Federal ownership and help preserve the recreational setting by reducing surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development.

This Plan proposes a significant increase in the development of opportunities for nonmotorized access. The setting for this type of use in the East Mojave is excellent, but virtually no provision has been made to inform the public of where the best opportunities are, or to establish a system of trails specifically for nonmotorized access. The proposed trail system through some of the most scenic mountain areas of the East Mojave will become one of the prime recreational "attractions" for nonmotorized use. "Primitive" or unmaintained trails and the trail guides that would describe and interpret them (B-5 and B-6) will provide opportunities for visitors wanting a less developed or structured experience.

As a result, nonmotorized use of the Scenic Area will increase, including hiking, mountain bike riding, and equestrian use. Project plans for specific trails will address potential conflicts between the different users. It could become economically viable to develop commercial services such as riding stables, dude ranches, and guided hikes. The environmental assessment prepared for the permit for those commercial ventures on public land will examine the impacts of these operations in detail.

The Plan also addresses the need for interpreted vehicle trails such as the Mojave Road and the East Mojave Heritage Trail. The interpretive message provided by the guides produced for each trail will provide additional information about what the visitor is seeing, give directions, and explain appropriate user behavior toward desert resources and uses. Driving, hiking, or riding the Mojave Road has become one of the most popular recreation uses in the East Mojave over the past five years. The draft management proposals for the Mojave Road address problems that will result from increasing use. Camping restrictions and a permit system will allow use levels to rise while still maintaining dispersed use patterns and a sense of isolation. Additional interpretive trails/guides will accommodate expected future demand for interpreted experiences on primitive and maintained roads.

Four actions are proposed to improve camping opportunities in the East Mojave. The actions will allow increases in visitor use at several very desirable locations while preserving the resource base and dispersing users through site-specific design plans. Designation of camping locations will focus use in already popular camping areas. BLM will identify specific sites that either are or are not suitable for camping due to resource concerns and define use areas accordingly.

The policy of allowing camping adjacent to or at the end of existing routes rather than up to 300 feet away from these routes will not adversely effect campers. Most existing camping sites are close to primary and secondary routes, so nearly all present sites will continue to be available. The policy will limit unnecessary cross-country travel, and will allow many areas that are presently disturbed to reestablish themselves. Implementation of this proposal will "freeze" use in areas already disturbed and yet allow camping alongside the approximately 3,000 miles of approved routes in the East Mojave. This is more than sufficient for projected increases in visitor use and demand for primitive camping opportunities.

The Plan proposes a significant increase in BLM's management presence in the Scenic Area. The establishment of manned administrative sites at Hole-in-the-Wall and Kelso will provide visitor services, allow faster emergency response, and help reduce visitor use conflicts and vandalism in the East Mojave's most-used areas. The Desert Information Outposts will serve as supplemental contact points at easily accessible areas scattered throughout the East Mojave. The development of information publications will substantially increase BLM's ability to provide accurate information while increasing visitor enjoyment of the more significant features of the East Mojave. Volunteers will help BLM oversee additional areas, and will help distribution. Their efforts will allow BLM to contact more visitors in the East Mojave, and will aid the oversight of resources. Interpretive sites will be designed and located to blend in with the historic, undeveloped character of the area, and will provide a recreational opportunity that is generally not available in the Scenic Area.

Many of these sites will provide an opportunity for BLM to explain the basic concepts of resource management and "desert etiquette" which will assist in environmental protection efforts. Taken as a whole, these efforts will be of significant benefit to recreation management of the East Mojave.

Hunting and shooting-related activities are currently among the most popular recreation uses in the East Mojave. Proposals to eliminate shooting around developed recreation sites and the adoption of additional firearms regulations (C-20) will have a minor adverse impact on hunters using firearms in specific, relatively small areas. This is because the total acreage involved in the closures is only a small percentage of the area available for hunting in the East Mojave. The only popular hunting locale to be closed is in the immediate vicinity of Piute Creek. None of the other changes will effect hunting. These impacts will be outweighed by the significant benefit to other recreation users in heavily visited areas. Implementation will enhance visitor safety, and remove a barrier to many visitors' enjoyment of areas by providing a more secure environment.

The adjustments in management of vehicle use called for in the Plan will have a negligible impact on most forms of recreation. The greatest benefit will result from increased efforts to sign and provide maps of commonly used routes, thereby helping to direct visitor use in the area, and acquisition of easements across private lands along access to recreation sites. Some recreationists may be adversely affected by the stricter guidelines for vehicle use in ill-defined washes, but since the majority of washes used by the public will remain open, overall impact will be negligible. The closure of routes MH216 and MH1313 west of Mid Hills campground will have a slight adverse impact on hunting by limiting vehicle use in an area known to support game species. Opening route SH2024 will improve nonmotorized use on Clark Mountain by providing better vehicle access to a trailhead. Other proposed route closures will not affect recreation opportunities because alternate access routes in the vicinity will remain open to use. The greatest potential impact from these efforts may be the gradual loss of the sense of freedom recreationists currently enjoy in an unsigned, relatively unregulated environment. This potential impact should be moderated by BLM's intent to use passive controls such as rock barriers in place of signs where terrain permits.

While not specifically a recreation activity, education and research share many of the same concerns--maintenance of the resource base, vehicle access opportunities, and reduction in use conflicts. Many impacts discussed above for recreation apply equally to education and research. Mineral withdrawals and shooting restrictions will be of particular benefit to research activities at the Granite Mountain Research Natural Area, while mineral withdrawals and enforcement of vehicle use regulations will be of primary interest to education and research activities at Soda Springs Desert Studies Center.

Impacts on Vehicle Use

Vehicle access is one of the major issues in the East Mojave. Most actions control or manage vehicle use, particularly unauthorized vehicle use. These controls do not represent a major change from those in the Desert Plan; rather, they make the Plan's recommendations more specific and applicable to the East Mojave.

Acquisition of selected private and State lands will not only assure that vehicle access to popular recreation sites will continue, but will also provide access where it is not currently available.

In addition to land acquisitions, 50 miles of access easements will be purchased. This will provide increased access or, at the least, assure that existing access will continue. The New York Mountains, the Woods/Hackberry Mountains, and Lanfair Valley would benefit most.

By further defining "drivable washes", some washes will be closed. These may include those in Desert Tortoise habitat (for example, in the Fenner and Ivanpah valleys), braided washes, and other areas where vehicles might destroy streambeds or vegetation. However, most washes now being used by vehicles meet the definition of "drivability" and in many cases already have been approved through the route designation process.

The approximately 3,000 miles of designated roads and trails located within the Scenic Area are expected to meet the demands for vehicle access both now and in the future. In most instances, areas where routes have been closed to vehicle use are served by some alternate vehicle route.

A major focus of the signing and interpretive program is to educate the using public on appropriate behavior relating to vehicle access. This program will give visitors a clearer idea of where to drive in the East Mojave. A key element will be the installation of route signs, which will be keyed to maps. These maps will be widely available. The number of signs will not be so high as to eliminate a sense of discovery.

The increased road maintenance program will provide access opportunities while assuring a reliable and safe vehicle access network.

Impacts on Visual Resource Management

Several actions proposed by the East Mojave Management Plan will, when implemented, significantly improve BLM's ability to maintain or improve scenic quality in the East Mojave. This will be accomplished through limitations on use or development, on-the-ground efforts to remove or repair existing structures, and establishment of policies that will emphasize visual resource management in the decisionmaking process.

Several actions limiting use in the East Mojave will directly or indirectly improve visual resource management. The conversion of all multiple-use Class M areas to Class L (Management Action A-1) will allow BLM to require stricter visual mitigation measures for surface-disturbing activities in these areas; at present mitigation may generally be proposed only for actions disturbing more than five acres. Several areas of outstanding scenic quality are proposed for withdrawal from the mining laws (A-7), precluding surface disturbance from mineral development. This is important because in many of these areas, road building or other mining-related impacts could be mitigated only with great difficulty or not at all. Areas that will particularly benefit from mineral withdrawals are Piute Creek, Caruthers Canyon, Kelso Dunes, the Granite Mountains, and Wildhorse Mesa. Vehicle controls, including stricter enforcement of vehicle regulations (B-1) and elimination of cross-country travel to access camping sites (C-14), further reduce possible scarring caused by unauthorized off highway vehicle use. These controls will be of greatest benefit in areas where vehicle tracks would be seen from key vantage points (e.g., on hillsides), or where vehicle tracks would likely not be "erased" by natural means. The areas most benefiting from these actions will be the Mid Hills. New York Mountains, Woods/Hackberry Mountains, Cinder Cones, and viewpoints along the Mojave Road.

By prohibiting commercial wind energy development in the Scenic Area and Mountain Pass region (D-6), the Plan will help maintain visual quality, particularly in the Providence Mountain and Mountain Pass areas (where wind energy development would be most likely to occur). Wind towers, road building, fencing, and other associated activities have a major detrimental effect on scenic quality within a viewshed.

Utility corridor "E" will be relocated to a position outside the eastern boundary of the Scenic Area and contingent corridor "W" will be eliminated (N-1). There are existing transmission lines in both corridors. Although removal of these corridors from the scenic area will not lead to the removal of existing facilities, it will preclude future transmission lines (larger than 161kV) and pipelines (of a diameter of 12 inches or greater) from being located in this part of the Scenic Area. New large transmission lines can require 150-foot-tall towers constructed every thousand feet, while a major pipeline can require the clearing of a 50 to 100 foot wide construction right of way. The two existing transmission lines in corridor "E" are easily seen from the eastern part of the East Mojave. Therefore, this action will have a moderate beneficial impact on visual resource management. In addition, facility developments within the proposed new alignment of corridor "E" will be further from and will not create additional visual contrasts within the Scenic Area.

Scenic quality will be improved by funding projects to remove unused or abandoned range projects (L-3) and reduce visual contrasts of existing structures (D-3 and D-4). Full-scale implementation of these three actions will lead BLM to remove unsightly fences, windmills, tanks, and other range improvements throughout the Scenic Area. Functioning existing structures could be repainted and relocated, and the immediate area cleaned up. This will be particularly beneficial in Lanfair Valley, where the density of structures and other developments is high, and to a lesser degree in several other areas (such as the Mid Hills, Hackberries, and Cima Dome). Economic impact to the owners of these structures would be minimal, since redesign could be done as part of normally scheduled maintenance.

The proposed cooperative agreement with San Bernardino County concerning private land development (by controlling parcel size and establishing scenic easements) will encourage future development only in areas of the East Mojave that have already been developed. This would prevent haphazard, scattered developments that will detract from long-distance views, and will maintain the natural appearance of the region.

Some "actions" are policy statements that will have varying effects on how BLM makes decisions affecting the Scenic Area. The most significant of these is the proposal to require that all discretionary actions meet Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I guidelines in the Piute Creek, Clark Mountain, and New

York Mountain Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and VRM Class II guidelines in the rest of the Scenic Area (D-1). Application of these guidelines will require a higher standard for mitigation and reclamation of surface disturbing activities. The designation of scenic corridors along the Mojave Road, Wildhorse Canyon Road, and most of the County-maintained roads (D-4) will also establish a policy affecting BLM decisionmaking by encouraging the location of any necessary structures away from the highway network used by most visitors. Adoption of VRM Class I standards for visual change along these corridors will have a long-term positive impact on visual resource management. The requirement for visual simulations for large-scale projects or projects in sensitive areas (D-2) will provide a useful tool to evaluate the visual changes likely to result from development, and will be even more significant in helping BLM and/or the proponent to more effectively mitigate visual change.

As visitor use increases and more areas are subject to use or development, the visual character of the East Mojave will change. Intelligent decisions on location and style of development will be an important factor in minimizing the overall negative effects of this change. The benefits of this approach will be particularly significant for users of trails and camping areas, where visual quality is one of the primary factors in determining the quality of experience. Implementation of all actions described above will be essential if visual quality is to be maintained at acceptable levels.

Impacts on Wilderness Values and Management

Twenty-three areas formally identified by BLM possess the wilderness values described in Section 2(c) of the 1964 Wilderness Act. These values include naturalness, the opportunity for solitude and/or a primitive and unconfined recreation experience. Many possess special features which are unique to the Scenic Area or the California Desert. The proposed actions will allow BLM to improve its interim management of Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), and their eventual management as designated wilderness areas. The main benefits will come from an increase in BLM field presence, limitations on access, and identification of recreation sites that will help "channel" use into approved areas.

Naturalness: Overall, the proposed actions will benefit the naturalness of these areas. Of immediate benefit to the area's naturalness is the proposed strict enforcement of vehicle use regulations and the elimination of cross-country access to camping areas (C-14). These actions will eliminate a potentially serious threat to the integrity of several WSAs where cross-country travel would leave long-lasting visual scars. Elimination of cross-country access for camping will help maintain scenic quality along WSA boundaries and along approved routes entering the WSAs. These actions will significantly decrease the long-term impacts that can be expected to occur from increased visitation and associated vehicle use. WSAs that will benefit most are the Woods-Hackberry Mountains, Table Mountain, North and South Providence Mountains, Mid Hills, Kelso Dunes, Granite Mountains, and Cinder Cones.

Signing of WSA boundaries (E-1) will improve enforcement since users will be forewarned of the areas' special designations. Although signing will reduce the potential for impairing activities, increases in visitor use will require more frequent monitoring to ensure that wilderness values are not impaired.

Actions to increase the frequency of monitoring, including the use of volunteers (E-2), will significantly benefit BLM's field presence. Monthly overflights (P-4) will increase BLM's ability to detect impairing activities in high-use areas.

Recommended land acquisitions (A-2) include all private and State properties in WSAs recommended by BLM as suitable for wilderness designation (18,000 acres), and a significant proportion of private properties in most WSAs recommended nonsuitable. Acquisition would benefit naturalness by limiting development of these properties to standards that meet BLM's wilderness nonimpairment criteria.

The Mojave Road passes through six WSAs, five of which are within the Scenic Area. Elimination of camping along WSA segments of the Mojave Road will, considering its high use levels, help preserve the naturalness of these linear segments in each WSA.

Proposals to withdraw several areas from mineral entry (A-7) will be of primary benefit to those WSAs that would eventually be returned to multiple-use management. BLM's interim management, and eventual wilderness management of designated areas, will provide sufficient protection to retain wilderness values.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The proposal to construct a nonmotorized trail system throughout the Scenic Area (B-5) will provide primitive trails in several WSAs and will increase opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Development of the trails and distribution of information on primitive recreation opportunities will make these opportunities more readily available to the public. At the same time, increases in primitive recreationists will potentially reduce the opportunities for solitude. Impacts to this wilderness value will be closely monitored and use restrictions will be implemented as necessary. Overall, opportunities for solitude will remain good to outstanding depending upon one's location within the WSA, the time of week, and season of the year.

Impacts on Archaeological and Historical Resources

Management actions consist of those which will benefit cultural properties and those which, while posing potential conflicts, may be resolved employing established treatment procedures.

Proposed actions appreciably contributing to cultural resource protection and preservation include acquisition of privately held archaeological sites (Management Action A-2), signing and road closures in sensitive areas (B-2, B-3, and B-4), mineral withdrawals (B-6 and B-7), limited fire suppression (O-1), and intensive cultural resource program management (F-1, F-2, and F-3). Several small though highly significant cultural properties, consisting of long-occupied rock shelters with pictographs and open site areas, have been identified for acquisition. These properties will benefit from protection and intensive study. Short segments of several access roads have been selected for closure in response to erosion and illegal collection which have resulted from easy vehicle access. Signs describing Archaeological Resource Protection Act regulations will be installed on a case-by-case basis, dependent upon resource significance, extent of visitation, and the potential for vandalism. This will reduce the chance that resources will be degraded. Mineral withdrawals have been specified for highly significant archaeological site complexes in order to best assure protection and preservation of representative values occurring in the Scenic Area. Damage to cultural resources resulting from fire suppression efforts often far exceeds overall impacts from the burn. Cultural resources occurring in wooded areas will be subject to some degree of thermal alteration, but not to the extent that chemicals, vehicle use, and ground-clearing in association with fire suppression would cause. A limited suppression plan will cause less damage to cultural resources because surface disturbance will be greatly reduced.

Management actions which could damage cultural resources include upgrading and regular maintenance of roads, developing interpretive sites and trails, and establishing new, or expanding existing campgrounds. Many of these actions are located within known areas of high cultural resource sensitivity. In providing better access and increased visitor use, a higher incidence of cultural resource depredation in these areas will occur. These actions are also likely to impact sites directly in the process of implementation. However, these effects can be negated or minimized through measures such as avoidance or data recovery during the environmental review process for a specific action.

Overall, envisioned visitor increases from 60,000 to 200,000 annual visits will contribute to proportionate increases in adverse effects upon cultural resources. The additional staffing and funding identified for implementation of planned actions, however, will mitigate this increase in visitor use.

Impacts on Vegetation

Implementation of the Scenic Area Plan will provide a minor to moderately positive impact to the vegetation in the Scenic Area. This will be accomplished both through the collection of additional data and through active management.

Several plant communities have attracted special interest, including the Cima Dome Joshua Tree Woodland, the Kelso Dunes community, and the Granite Mountain flora. Studies prescribed within the livestock element of the Plan (Management Actions L-1, L-2) will examine the relationship of cattle grazing with these areas.

Additional information for the management of vegetation will be provided by soil surveys (H-1). Soils data are required to determine the ecological potential of the community. This will have no actual on-the-ground impact, but will serve as a barometer of the area's condition.

Restoration of native vegetation at seeps and springs (I-1) will be accomplished largely through the physical removal of tamarisk. This is a weedy introduced bush from the mideast that uses prodigious quantities of water, poisons the soil, and chokes out native vegetation. Competition between native riparian vegetation and tamarisk will be reduced, thus allowing native plants to reestablish themselves in their former habitat.

Increased recreational use is inevitable in the Scenic Area. Vegetation along existing routes will be subject to impact by restricting vehicle camping to roadsides (C-14) but to a much smaller extent than the current policy. In heavy use areas, this could result in impacts to vegetation within 15 feet of either side of the road, compared to impacts up to 300 feet from existing routes under current management. The implementation of the management policy for the Mojave Road and other interpretive trails (C-11) will benefit vegetation by restricting levels of use and designating camping locations for group use.

Restrictions on recreational vehicle use will also result in minor to moderately favorable impacts. Throughout the Scenic Area, there is a problem with people driving over vegetation as they drive up washes. This will be alleviated by adopting a stricter policy towards vehicle use in washes (B-3).

Improvements at campgrounds and day use areas (C-7, C-13, C-15, C-16) will benefit vegetation overall by concentrating use in small areas. Road improvements and construction of non-motorized trails will have no impact. The location of facilities near, but not in, sensitive areas (for example, Caruthers Canyon in the New York Mountains) will benefit vegetation while still allowing some use.

Elimination of firewood sales (I-2) will greatly reduce the amount of wood collecting. Casual collection for campfires will continue, but steps taken to encourage visitors to bring their own wood or buy from suppliers should help maintain adequate levels of deadwood material. This will benefit nutrient recycling and wildlife habitat.

Two land status changes will potentially have positive impacts to plants. The acquisition of additional lands within the Scenic Area (A-2) will allow the BLM to manage the vegetation on those parcels. This reduces the possibility that activities will occur without prior environmental analysis. The additional withdrawals proposed (A-7) will help preserve the communities on those lands by eliminating the possibility of mining- related impacts.

Operations conducted under a limited suppression fire plan will have significantly fewer impacts on vegetation than operations conducted under a full suppression policy. Limited suppression requires far less surface disturbance from such activities as fireline construction.

Fire is a natural element in these communities. Grasses in particular may benefit from fast-moving fires, which reduce shrubby competition and old dead growth. However, grasses are not the only plants that may benefit. Many weedy species, such as Gutierrezia spp. and Bromus rubens, now inhabit the Scenic Area. These may increase in number or even come to dominate burned areas, if they have seeds present and competing plants (many of which are desirable) are killed.

Sensitive vegetation will be negligibly affected by the Proposed Action. No federally listed threatened or endangered plants or their habitat are known to be in the Scenic Area. Thorn's Buckwheat, Eriogonum ericifolium var. thornei, listed by the State as endangered, is present in small numbers. In addition, six species listed by the BLM as "sensitive" are found here. All of these species could benefit slightly from increased protection (A-1, A-2, A-7) and stricter enforcement of vehicle regulations (B-1). Any surface-disturbing activities which could potentially impact these plants will have separate environmental analyses prepared, and impacts will be mitigated.

The most positive impact the Plan will have on the area's vegetation will be through better visitor management. By providing well-defined roads, trails, and campgrounds, the impacts caused by the mushrooming recreational growth over the next ten years will be limited to small areas. This will allow the vegetation in the overwhelming majority of the Scenic Area to remain undisturbed.

Impacts on Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife habitat will generally benefit from specific measures designed to allow easier wildlife access to water, or extend the range of species, limitations on development, and controls on vehicle use.

Wildlife will benefit from improved access to water (Management Action J-3). While it is Bureau policy and practice to incorporate wildlife needs into new livestock water facilities, many older stock watering sites are not designed this way. Wildlife losses due to the lack of bird ramps in troughs or troughs being too high to allow smaller or younger animals to drink has been documented. Retrofitting existing water facilities with bird ramps and piping water away to lower profile secondary troughs will make additional water available. Extending water production periods beyond that needed for range management will also provide additional water to wildlife.

Constructing additional big game guzzlers and transplanting bighorn sheep in the Ivanpah/Mescal Range will enhance habitat and broaden the range of this BLM sensitive species. In addition, water sources will benefit all wildlife in the area. The restoration of natural vegetation at selected springs will also enhance wildlife habitat by promoting the development of lush riparian areas within the East Mojave.

Desert tortoise habitat will generally benefit from the implementation of the management plan. While human presence in tortoise areas is normally detrimental due to habitat loss, direct physical impacts to tortoises (shooting, collection, harassment, being crushed by vehicles), and indirect physical impact from predation by human-associated wildlife (coyotes and ravens), the Plan directs recreation visitors away from crucial tortoise habitat through the careful location of facilities, and closure to vehicle use of prime habitat throughout the East Mojave. In addition, proposed land acquisitions in the Fenner Valley and Ivanpah Valley Desert Tortoise Habitat Management Areas will put most of this critical area into Federal ownership and protect it from development and disturbance. The implementation of Habitat Management Plans in both the Fenner Valley and Ivanpah Habitat Management Areas will give the Bureau solid guidelines with which to make future management decisions in these two important areas. Some tortoise losses will continue to occur along main traveled routes as visitor use increases. However, the Plan will help keep losses to a minimum.

Inventories will locate raptor special use areas. This will allow conflicts with other uses to be mitigated. Measures which could be used include seasonal closures, increased patrol, and special stipulations to be applied to projects allowed in the area.

Revising the grazing Allotment Management Plans will benefit wildlife by reducing or even eliminating conflicts between livestock and wildlife. For example, by delaying cattle turnout in primarily ephemeral pastures, BLM can reduce the conflict between cattle and tortoises in early spring. A range-rotation system or the use of salt blocks and fences could also prevent competition problems between bighorn sheep and livestock. Also, by working with the livestock industry BLM can develop numerous water sources which will benefit both livestock and wildlife and ensure future maintenance of such projects.

In some cases, full-suppression fire management practices can be more detrimental to wildlife and their habitat than the fire itself. For example, the use of heavy equipment or construction of a firebreak in prime desert tortoise habitat may cause more habitat destruction than allowing the fire to burn itself out. In fact, a limited fire suppression policy may even enhance wildlife habitat in some areas where flash fires can burn old or woody portions of plants and allow for new growth to prosper. Additionally, fire may be used to reduce shrub densities in certain areas (although it may be necessary to reseed these areas with native grasses), thus creating mosaic habitats and increasing vegetative variability.

Proposed mining withdrawals (B-7) could help reduce destruction of wildlife habitat in the future. Agreements with the County and with private landowners concerning the size and extent of private land developments will also reduce future loss of wildlife habitat in the East Mojave. The acquisition of easements for access across private land will insure BLM access to prime wildlife habitat, wildlife study plots and water sources (springs, guzzlers, etc.) which may lie on public land surrounded by private land.

Strictly defining which washes can be used by vehicles (B-3) will benefit Desert Tortoise habitat in particular. This is because such habitat tends to be in the vicinity of braided washes. Signing also will benefit wildlife because vehicle use can be directed away from sensitive habitat.

Stricter control of vehicle use in the East Mojave will have obvious beneficial effects on wildlife habitat and populations. Cross-country travel can cause substantial degradation of wildlife habitat by destroying vegetation, ruining nesting areas or burrows, and encouraging further off-road exploration. In the East Mojave, this is generally caused by persons seeking camping sites. Limiting camping to sites adjacent to primary and secondary routes (C-14) will alleviate this problem. By eliminating the cause of such conflicts, the detrimental effects will be significantly reduced.

Impacts on Livestock Grazing

The Plan will have a slight, positive impact on the livestock grazing program. Implementation of the Scenic Area Plan will reduce the potential for increased vandalism and livestock harassment resulting from increases in visitor use. Providing the public information on range etiquette, restricting activities in some areas, and channeling use to clearly identified trails and camping areas will all help to reduce the impacts. Several specific management actions directly affect the grazing program; these are discussed below.

Visual resource management proposals (Management Actions D-1 through D-4) place restrictions on future range improvements. The primary effect would be to limit the construction of new windmills to areas where they would be visually unobtrusive. Other new range improvements still will be allowed, but will require better design and more attention to siting to help them blend in with the surrounding terrain. As a result, operating costs will increase slightly.

Range improvements, especially water troughs and tanks, are frequently shot. Restricting the number of areas open to shooting through the adoption of enforceable firearms regulations, and the posting of those regulations (C-20) will reduce this type of vandalism.

Collection of Order 3 soil survey data (action H-1) will benefit the range program in several ways. The greatest use will be to help determine the potential plant community of a site. This in turn will be used to help corroborate the condition of these rangelands. A second use will be to help predict the impacts of future range improvements.

The land tenure proposals (A-2, A-3, A-4) will have no impact on the range program. The proposed acquisition of some State and private land will eliminate most non-Federal inholdings in several allotments. In several cases, BLM will be acquiring a rancher's base property. This is non-Federal land controlled by the grazing lessee. It is used in conjunction with his grazing operation on public land, and is required by BLM prior to obtaining a grazing lease. If BLM acquires any base property, it will honor existing agreements and leases. This will allow the land to serve as base property after it passes into Federal control. The net impact on the lessees will be negligible.

The proposed "limited" fire suppression policy (O-1) will slightly benefit the rangeland by eliminating the unnatural buildup of vegetation in some areas. This will also provide better access for livestock, resulting in better distribution.

Improving the availability of livestock water for wildlife (J-3) will have no effect on livestock. In all cases, the same quantities of water will be available for cattle, at their present locations.

Removal of excess burros by 1992, as prescribed by current management plans, will negligibly impact livestock grazing. Reduced burro numbers will eliminate some conflicts with cattle at privately owned waters.

The revision of Allotment Management Plans (L-1) will provide a moderately positive impact on management of the range program. The initial change in the Allotment Management Plans will be to redefine the objectives with the goals of the Scenic Area in mind. Existing grazing systems will be changed if it is determined through monitoring that grazing use is causing desert tortoise or desert bighorn sheep populations to decline. The need for new range improvements will also be examined. Not all existing improvements are included in the present plans, nor are their need and purpose adequately discussed. In light of this, some new projects may be proposed, while other proposals may be

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deleted. Environmental analyses will be conducted for any new projects to assess their impact on the area's resources.

Expanded monitoring (L-2) will also be discussed in Allotment Management Plans. This will permit incorrect stocking levels to be identified more easily, allowing for adjustment of use to alleviate overstocking. Issues raised in the Scenic Area Plan, such as the effect of grazing upon Joshua trees, the Granite Mountains, and Kelso Dunes, will also be addressed.
Removing abandoned range materials (L-3) should have no effect on grazing interests. Lessees will be allowed to claim and retrieve abandoned range materials before BLM removes them.

Impacts on Mineral Development

Several actions proposed by the East Mojave Management Plan will have an adverse impact on mineral development in the Scenic Area. The most significant adverse impact will come from proposed mining law withdrawals covering 90,000 acres. The most significant positive impact will result from acquisition of private lands, particularly those parcels located in mineralized areas, that would then be opened to mineral entry under the mining laws. Other actions will affect mineral exploration and development by requiring stricter mitigation or reclamation standards. These actions will add to the expense of development by providing additional guidelines on what constitutes "unnecessary and undue degradation" on public lands in the Scenic Area.

Withdrawals of public lands from the operation of the mining laws (Management Action A-7) will have a negative impact on mineral exploration in the Scenic Area. The magnitude of the impact will depend on the specific conditions existing at the time of withdrawal, and will include such variables as valid existing rights, proximity to ongoing mining operations, mineral potential, and the occurrence of resources such as sand and gravel or water which could be used for mineral development and/or processing. Of the 15 proposed withdrawals, only one is expected to have a negative impact on mineral development according to existing mineral data. Approximately 50% of the proposed Caruthers Canyon withdrawal is classified by the State of California as having moderate to high potential for metallic minerals. Abundant sources for these minerals, however, are found throughout the District. Any potential negative impacts to mineral development resulting from the proposed withdrawals will be thoroughly analyzed in the mineral report prepared as a part of the withdrawal process.

Acquired lands not within suitable Wilderness Study Areas or areas withdrawn from mineral entry will eventually be opened to location under the mining laws. Approximately 126,000 acres of land will become available if the proposed acquisitions are consummated. The amount of mineral development could range from negligible to major depending on many variables such as mineral potential, economics, etc.

Action M-1 proposes to strictly limit the extraction of saleable minerals such as sand, gravel and cinders. There will be some impact to organizations such as CalTrans which require large amounts of material for Interstate resurfacing projects. However, there are adequate sand and gravel sources adjacent to or in the vicinity of the Scenic Area so as not to severely handicap CalTrans in locating suitable material. Local County road maintenance projects would still be allowed to take the small quantities they need. The two grandfathered cinder quarries will adequately supply local needs for cinder materials. There are numerous other sources of cinders in southern California and Nevada which could supply any additional needs. Sand and gravel for use by existing gold mines or other mines that might develop in the East Mojave region would still be available from local sources for necessary mine road maintenance and mine developments. The impact of restricting material sales to local government use will have a minor effect on southern California's mineral industry.

A number of other actions will require operators to adhere to stricter mitigation and/or reclamation measures and by providing additional guidelines as to what constitutes "unnecessary or undue degradation" in the Scenic Area.

Changing all lands in the Scenic Area currently in multiple-use Class "M" to "L" (A-1) will require all operators within those areas to submit "plans of operation" rather than "Notices." This should result in longer agency review. More measures (such as additional environmental mitigation and performance bonds) could be required, thus increasing start-up and operating costs. This could conceivably result in minor adverse impacts on large mining companies and major impacts on small operators.

Requiring visual simulations (D-2) and adherence to Visual Resource Management Class I and II guidelines (D-1) will also require additional expense on the part of many operators. Large operations with strong financial backing should not be affected. However, small, weekend-type operations could conceivably have difficulty exploring and developing mineral properties under the mining laws due to the increased operating costs, but this economic impact should be mitigated somewhat by the smaller scale of these operations and consequent lower reclamation costs.

Establishing scenic corridors (D-5), expanding existing recreational facilities (C-15, C-16, C-17), creating new recreational facilities (L-7, C-13), reintroducing wildlife into currently unoccupied habitat (J-2), fencing water developments and appropriating water for wildlife use, and designating a National Recreation Trail (C11), will also result in slight negative impacts to mineral development. Negligible impacts will occur in those affected areas without existing mineral rights and with no known mineral potential. Adverse impacts could occur in those developed areas either in close proximity to areas with existing mineral rights and/or in areas having high mineral potential, particularly the Mescal Range.

Impacts to/from Non-Mineral Development

The Management Plan proposes several actions which, taken as a whole, will reduce the level of human development in the East Mojave, particularly large-scale nonmineral projects, while still allowing for the "use and occupation" of the lands as stated in the Plan's management goals. For developments on public lands, the most significant actions are the proposed change of multiple use class M to L on 120,000 acres, adoption of strict visual resource management guidelines, restrictions on wind energy developments, and relocation of utility corridors outside the Scenic Area. By limiting the scale and visual impact of projects on public lands, the scenic quality of the area can be maintained at or near present levels.

On private lands, the Scenic Area Plan will have its greatest effect through the proposal to acquire 149,000 acres of private and state-owned property in the most sensitive or significant portions of the East Mojave. For those lands that will remain in private ownership, the proposed partnership between the BLM, County and property owners will help determine appropriate levels and styles of development for the Scenic Area. Property owners will likely not be greatly affected by these proposals, since most agreements would be voluntary in nature. Under no circumstance will any proposed action result in a "taking without compensation." In some instances, voluntary restrictions may improve an owners interest in the land by maintaining the environmental qualities which prompted the original purchase of land. Owners who purchased property for commercial or large scale use may find their profit constrained by BLM or County regulations, but would be given the opportunity to sell or trade into areas with fewer constraints.

Alternative B - No Action (No Change from Existing Management)

Impacts on Recreation Management

The No Action Alternative will result in negligible to moderate adverse impacts to recreation management. Lower staffing levels will mean fewer and less up-to-date publications and a smaller field presence by uniformed employees to provide visitor services. Campgrounds, already being used to or above capacity several times during the year, will receive maintenance only at current levels, and will not be increased in size or number for the foreseeable future. Areas receiving high use will be developed in a timely manner to provide the facilities necessary to address environmental concerns. Increased recreation use in many areas will lead to conflicts with target-shooting and, to a lesser extent, hunting activities.

In the long-term, there will be a decline in the recreational setting, as use levels outstrip the capability of many areas to provide the quality of experience desired by most visitors. At present, that quality is defined by a natural-appearing landscape, intact historic structures, dispersed use, and a sense of freedom or lack of control. As the number of visitors each year increases, the current style of recreation management that puts an emphasis on minimal controls and facilities will have to be changed to meet the new conditions of intensive use in several significant areas.

Impacts on Vehicle Use

Adoption of the No Action Alternative would be of minor benefit to motorized vehicle use. The existing designated road and trail network in place in the Scenic Area is providing sufficient vehicle access to satisfy current and future demand. There are currently no restrictions on the use of specific types of vehicles other than State licensed/unlicensed requirements.

The existing published materials (Desert Access Guides, brochures, Resource Area Guides) are providing valuable information on motorized vehicle access in the Scenic Area. This material, however limited, is having a beneficial impact on vehicle use opportunities and is helping assure vehicle use takes place in a responsible manner.

Existing road maintenance levels will not change. Roads and trails will be maintained as needed and may deteriorate over time, requiring significant investments in time and money, and negatively impacting motorized use.

Ongoing land acquisition and easement programs would assure additional access on roads and trails where vehicle use is allowed. But because of the case-by-case nature of the current program, no significant benefits are expected as a result, with the exception of the Mojave Road.

Signing proposed under the No Action Alternative would be sufficient to provide the minimum level of information needed for access in the Scenic Area. In areas where signing priorities are low, potential exists for illegal use of closed routes where sign maintenance is poor.

Impacts on Visual Resource Management

Overall, the No Action Alternative would have a negligible to moderate negative impact on visual resource management in the East Mojave. Although the Desert Plan provides sufficient controls to maintain the scenic quality of the East Mojave at or near current levels over the short term, and very strict visual resource management guidelines for areas designated wilderness, there are no specific guidelines that would allow BLM to maintain scenic quality as use increases over the long term.

Visual resources will continue their decline in the Mescal Range area under the less-stringent guidelines for multiple-use Class M (moderate use) areas. Concentrations of private lands in Lanfair Valley, and scattered parcels in areas of high visual sensitivity that will not be acquired, may be developed to some extent over the next ten years as interest in the East Mojave continues to increase. Mineral activity and associated surface disturbance will reduce current outstanding scenic quality without protection offered by mineral withdrawals. A continued, incremental decrease in visual quality may occur along popular roads as visitors drive up to 300 feet from the road in search of campsites. Removal of abandoned range improvements and redesign of existing structures may occur as a result of normal maintenance, but will be done with less Bureau involvement due to manpower and budget constraints.

Impacts to Wilderness Values and Management

There will be very little difference in wilderness values and management if the No Action Alternative were approved. BLM is required by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act to manage Wilderness Study Areas so that their suitability for wilderness designation is not impaired. Once areas are designated by Congress, BLM will manage the areas to preserve their wilderness qualities. These mandates are the same under either plan alternative. BLM's ability to properly manage these areas before or after designation will be lessened somewhat by adoption of the No Action Alternative in that controls on vehicle use would be less restrictive (for example, allowing vehicle use within 300 feet of roads for camping, and allowing vehicle use to continue in many ill-defined washes). Staffing levels for the Needles Resource Area, particularly for positions that will be involved in patrol and public contact, will also be lower under the No Action Alternative. Monitoring efforts will still meet minimal standards, but will likely be improved mainly through increases in volunteer programs.

Impacts on Archaeological and Historical Resources

Cultural resources will still receive protection pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act and BLM's implementing regulations and policies. However, several measures intended to decrease indirect impacts to cultural resources will not be implemented. Additional inventories for cultural resources will continue to be driven by the need to review areas that will be affected by surface-disturbing activities. These surveys occur only in the project area, and often are not in areas with significant cultural properties. BLM's data base therefore does not fully reflect the array of cultural resources in the East Mojave. Investigations intended to give a clearer

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picture of the location and extent of these resources will not occur in an organized manner, constraining efforts to effectively monitor and protect the resource base.

Adverse impacts will result from continuation of actions which have proven ineffective in reducing damage to cultural resources. Continued use of vehicles in ill-defined washes and vehicle camping as much as 300 feet from existing roads will lead to moderate adverse impacts to cultural resources located in these areas. A much-reduced program for land acquisition and mineral withdrawals will be carried out under the No Action Alternative. Moderate adverse impacts to cultural resources will result from surface-disturbing activities on private lands, and from activity associated with mineral exploration/development on public lands having particularly high cultural resource value. The areas most affected under this alternative are in the New York, Providence, and Woods-Hackberry Mountains.

Continued full suppression of fires will have a major adverse impact on many non-structural cultural resources within the burned area. However, there are few fires in the East Mojave, so the overall level of impact would be minor. Historic structures would be protected from fire under both alternatives.

In anticipation of increased visitor use over the next ten years, the lack of protective planning efforts and implementation will undoubtedly result in the loss of many cultural values in the Scenic Area.

Impacts on Vegetation

Primary impacts of this alternative result from the increased recreational use of the region. More efficient management will also be hampered by a lack of information to base decisions on, which will not be collected under this alternative (Management Action H-1).

The widely dispersed visitor use that has been a hallmark of the East Mojave presents little vegetation impact at low use levels. But as use increases to its projected levels, vegetation throughout the Scenic Area may be crushed by off-highway vehicles and campers. The current allowance of vehicle camping within 300 feet of any road subjects all vegetation in a 600-foot band along all roads to impact. As use increases, both vegetation composition and density will suffer. This will impact portions of at least four unusual plant assemblages. In addition, unrestricted use of washes and continued use of all-terrain vehicles without strict enforcement will allow vegetation throughout the Scenic Area to be crushed by the passage of vehicles.

Restoration of native vegetation at seeps and springs will continue, with impacts as described in the Proposed Action. Rehabilitation of riparian vegetation at Piute Creek will be hampered by the policy of allowing uncontrolled camping in the area. This will result in some soil compaction and trampling of vegetation.

Data gaps will continue to plague management under this alternative. The lack of information on the effects of livestock or key plant communities will force the BLM to make assumptions when evaluating grazing systems. This could result in the overuse of unusual vegetation, or in economic impacts to grazing lessees as a result of unnecessary reductions in use. The delay of soil surveys will similarly hinder the evaluation of current management.

Under the No Action Alternative, few private lands will be acquired in the Scenic Area. Unusual plant assemblages and sensitive plant species on private lands (particularly in the Woods-Hackberry Mountains, Lanfair Valley, Granite Mountains, and Providence Mountains) will be lost if these parcels are not acquired and are subsequently developed. The lack of additional withdrawals in this region leaves open the likelihood that some vegetation in these areas will be lost to mining activity.

Continuing the practice of selling firewood in the Scenic Area will result in the removal of most dead wood within ten years. By removing this organic matter, soils will deteriorate and become lower in nutrients. Visitors will not be encouraged to bring in their own firewood, thereby further reducing the amount of dead wood material in the East Mojave. The impact of this on the area's vegetation is unknown, but composition changes are possible.

The continued use of a full-suppression fire policy will help control the spread of introduced weeds in the Scenic Area. However, restricting fire will result in the unnatural buildup of dead plant material in some area, and will result in additional construction of firelines. This latter action will cause the destruction of vegetation in small areas, a minor adverse impact.

Impacts on Wildlife Habitat

Moderate adverse impacts on wildlife habitat will occur under this alternative, particularly over the long term as visitor use and surface- disturbing activity levels increase in areas that will receive protection under the Proposed Action. Stricter controls on vehicle use, including the elimination of cross-country vehicle access to camping areas up to 300 feet from existing routes and closure of several ill-defined and vegetated washes will not be adopted. The soils survey, which would have long-range beneficial impacts on vegetation management, will not be conducted. Private lands with significant wildlife habitat will be acquired over a much longer period of time. Surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration will continue in areas that will remain open to mineral entry under this alternative, but closed to entry under the Proposed Action. Wildlife areas most affected by adoption of the No Action Alternative will be the Ivanpah/Mescal Range, Ivanpah Valley, and Fenner Valley.

Currently there are no habitat management plans for the Fenner and Ivanpah Valleys, which support crucial desert tortoise habitat. In addition, these areas are interspersed with private and State land parcels, over which the Bureau has no control or jurisdiction. Although there have been few detrimental effects on desert tortoises to date, a surge in recreational use and human developments, without limitations such as restricting vehicle use in washes and for camping (Management Actions B-3 and C-14 under the Proposed Action), could severely reduce prime tortoise habitat.

Programs to introduce Elf Owls and bighorn sheep into new areas will continue under this alternative. The extensive water and spring development program in the East Mojave will be given additional emphasis if the Proposed Action is accepted, but will nevertheless be carried out under the No Action Alternative.

Impacts on Livestock Grazing

Impacts to the range program under this alternative are similar to those described for the Proposed Action. Soil surveys may still be completed, and Allotment Management Plans will be revised. This latter action will still involve the evaluation of range improvements and the relationship of grazing to wildlife. The monitoring program also will be expanded as necessary, although specific study on cattle/Joshua trees and grazing on the Kelso Dunes are unlikely to occur without additional funding.

Pressure from expanded recreational use will be the greatest impact to grazing. Vandalism of range improvements is already a problem in the more heavily used portions of the CDCA. Camping at water improvements and other harassment of livestock are also problems. Without the intensive BLM presence in the East Mojave that is provided through the Plan, these problems will become prevalent here.

Impacts on Mineral Development

Overall, the impacts to mineral development will be the same as those described under the Proposed Action. Existing withdrawals will be maintained where appropriate, and new withdrawals would be proposed as needed to protect sensitive areas. The Caruthers Canyon, Clark Mountain, and Soda Lake withdrawals are proposed as part of approved plans for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and will be pursued regardless of which alternative is selected. This action will be expected to have nearly identical impacts under either alternative.

Land acquisitions will proceed but at a much reduced pace under this alternative. Benefits to mineral development from the opening of additional acreage to the Federal mining laws will be minimal under this alternative. Leaving 120,000 acres under multiple-use Class "M" guidelines will reduce the amount of time needed to get approval for mining operations, representing a negligible beneficial impact to the mining industry.

Impacts to/from Non-Mineral Development

Adoption of the no action alternative would produce similar impacts to or from public land development as the proposed action. However, decisions on the level or style of development would continue to be made on a case-by-case basis, and denial of certain actions may be more difficult to justify without the stronger guidelines proposed by the Scenic Area Management Plan in place.

Private land development could create more impacts to scenic quality and the region's natural character under the no action alternative, but impact levels are difficult to assess at present since San Bernardino County has not completed work on its revised County Plan. Because of limited water and services in the Scenic Area, development potential for most private lands is probably low. Private land acquisition would continue under the no action alternative, but in a less coordinated manner.

CHAPTER 5- CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

CHAPTER 5

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Overview of the Process

Consultation and coordination with the public and governmental agencies was integrated into the development of the proposed action and alternatives analyzed in this planning process. Formal and informal consultation began in 1985 with the initial identification of issues and possible actions needed to address these issues. A 90-day public comment period for the Draft Plan was supplemented by ten public meetings held in July and September 1987. The Final Plan was developed in response to the comments received in writing and at the public meetings. After a 45 day public review of the Final Plan, a Decision Record will be prepared based on information contained in the Final Plan, Environmental Assessment, and comments received from the public during both review periods.

Coordination with Other Agencies

A number of other agencies were consulted during the development of the Scenic Area Plan. The Forest Service; California Department of Parks and Recreation; California Department of Fish and Game; California State Lands Commission; University of California Natural Reserve System; the County of San Bernardino Planning, Assessor's, and Board of Supervisors' Offices; and others took part in the development of this Plan.

Consistency with Other Plans

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) requires that BLM plans be as consistent as possible with the plans of other agencies, while Federal laws, policies and regulations are also considered. The East Mojave Plan considered existing plans of San Bernardino County, the State of California and other Federal agencies, and is consistent with them.

Public Participation

Scoping

In 1985, BLM initiated efforts to determine what issues needed to be resolved in the East Mojave National Scenic Area. An "ad hoc" committee was established with representation from San Bernardino County, the Sierra Club, California Association of Four Wheel Drive Vehicles, Friends of the Mojave Road, Citizens for Mojave National Park, local residents including ranchers, mining interests and wildlife/hunting interests. In several formal and informal gatherings, these individuals described what their different visions of the East Mojave's future were, and outlined ways they thought these visions might be achieved.

Consultations with the "ad hoc" committee members were supplemented by other scoping efforts, including two detailed briefings before the California Desert

Advisory Council to which the public had been invited through press releases and publications in the Federal Register; announcements in two issues of the Desert District's Planning Newsletter; and a thorough review of opinion statements made in regional newspapers, journals, and organizational publications. BLM personnel involved in the planning effort also discussed issues with representatives of companies or groups having a known interest in the Scenic Area's management.

Draft Plan Review

The following actions were taken to notify the public of the availability of the Draft Plan:

Notification in the Federal Register;

Distribution of a press release to over 5,000 individuals, organizations, California media, and agencies announcing availability; and

Direct mailing of the Draft Plan to those already having expressed an interest in receiving a copy.

The Draft Management Plan and Environmental Assessment was released for public review and comment on June 4, 1987. More than 1,500 copies were distributed during the 90-day public comment period.

Ten public meetings were held between July 6 and July 15 in the following cities: San Bernardino, Barstow, North Hollywood, Needles, San Pedro, Sacramento, Anaheim, and San Diego, California; and Las Vegas, Nevada. The meetings were designed to provide information to the public as well as accept formal comment. Approximately 300 individuals attended these workshops, with most seeking additional information rather than presenting their comments. Many of the 88 who did comment during the meetings also provided written copies of their statements which have been incorporated into the following analysis. To avoid duplication, we have considered only their written comments in the demographic analysis.

The letters received by BLM on the draft plan came from a wide variety of interests and locations. Tables 1 through 3 summarize the form of response, location, and respondent type. A total of 327 letters were received, of which two were duplicates. The responses contained 376 signatures.

A sizeable majority of the letters (73 percent) were unique responses, while 2 percent were identical form letters. The remaining 25 percent were individual letters, but contained virtually the same information and probably resulted from a letter-writing campaign. All of the form letters and 80 percent of the quasi-form letters were from the greater Los Angeles or San Francisco Bay areas. The content of the quasi-form letters is summarized in Table 6, and representative samples are reproduced on pages 53 and 54.

Twenty commenters (6 percent) listed an out-of-state address, most from the neighboring states of Arizona and Nevada (7 letters each). Two respondents were from Utah, with one from each of the following states: Alaska, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, and Oregon. Sixty-six commenters (21 percent) were from the northern part of California, defined for this purpose as

044

that portion of the state north of Bakersfield and the California Desert Conservation Area boundary.

The largest percentage of respondents (41 percent or 133 commenters) were from the Los Angeles/Orange County metropolitan area. Five percent (16 respondents) were from the San Bernardino/Riverside area, and another 3 percent (10 respondents) were from the San Diego area. Twenty-three percent (76 respondents) listed addresses within the California Desert Conservation Area, including four from within the East Mojave National Scenic Area and four within a few miles of it.

Most of the letters (79 percent) were from individuals with no group or business interest identified. Many people did indicate that they had spent considerable time in the East Mojave and were familiar with the area. The remaining 21 percent of the letters were sent by a variety of interests from governmental agencies, academic institutions and businesses, to environmental and recreational interest groups.

The three local government comments all came from San Bernardino County. Ten separate letters from various State agencies commented on the draft plan, including the Department of Transportation, California Highway Patrol, Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Planning, State Lands Commission, The Resources Agency, Division of Mines and Geology, and Department of Fish and Game. The three responses from federal agencies represented George Air Force Base, China Lake Naval Weapons Center, and the Laguna Niguel U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service field office.

Twelve letters were received from mineral interests, including four organizations and six mining companies that operate within the California Desert. Three Southern California utility companies submitted their comments, as did two livestock operators living within the Scenic Area.

The environmental/conservation community provided 14 letters in response to the draft plan. Half of those were from various chapters and sections of the Sierra Club. Other commenters included the Desert Protective Council, the California Native Plant Society, the Wilderness Society, and the National Parks and Conservation Association. Another four letters were received from wildlife-oriented organizations such as Defenders of Wildlife and the Desert Tortoise Council.

Eleven recreational interest groups responded to the draft plan - two rockhounding groups, a speleological society and eight off-road vehicle associations. Four university representatives commented, including two geology professors, the Director of the University of California Granite Mountain Natural Reserve, and the Director of the Desert Studies Consortium (Soda Springs). The remaining six commenters represented diverse organizations or companies ranging from the East Mojave Rock Art Recording Project to Wild Horse Organized Assistance.

Thus, the Scenic Area Draft Plan generated interest from many areas of the nation and from many individuals and groups. Although these statistics are interesting, the real importance of the input is found in the comments contained within the letters. The analysis of the comments themselves follows.

TABLE 1 RESPONDENT LOCATION*

Within California	Letters (#)		Out of State	Letters (#)	
Los Angeles/ Orange County	133	(41%)	Alaska	1	(**)
San Diego area	10	(3%)	Arizona	7	(2%)
San Bernardino/ Riverside area	16	(5%)	Massachusetts	1	(**)
Northern California	66	(21%)	Minnesota	1	(**)
California Desert Conservation Area	75	(23%)	Nevada	7	(2%)
			New York	1	(**)
			Oregon	1	(**)
			Utah	2	(1%)
			Unknown	6	(1%)
Totals	327	100%			

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*As listed by respondent in return address

**Less than 1%

TABLE 2 RESPONSE TYPE

Type of Response	Number	(Percentage)
Individual Letter	241	(73%)
Quasi-form Letter	81	(25%)
Form Letter	5	(2%)
Total	327	(100%)

TABLE 3 RESPONDENT TYPE

Type of Respondent	Number	(Percentage)
Individual	255	(78%)
Environmental/ Conservation	14	(4%)
Energy/Minerals	12	(4%)
Recreation	11	(3%)
State Government	10	(3%)
Wildlife	4	(1%)
Schools/Universities	4	(1%)
Federal Government	3	(1%)
Local Government	3	(1%)
Utility	3	(1%)
Livestock Grazing	3	(1%)
Other	5	(2%)
Totals	327	(100%)

TABLE 4 INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS SUBMITTING WRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT SCENIC AREA PLAN

1	Hans Achermann	Pluess-Staufer, Inc.
2	Sidney Adelman	
3	Richard Akawie	
4	Ellery Akers	
*5	Harriet Allen	
*6	Margaret Allender	California Mining Association
7	Scott Anderson	
*8	Judy Anderson	Sierra Club-S.Ca.Conservation Committee
9	Russ Anderson	
10	E.N. Anderson	
11	Orlo Anderson	Kaiser Steel Corporation
12	Melissa Arjuna	
13	Enid Arvidson	
14	Mrs Frederick Bacher Jr	
*15	Walter Barbuck	
16	Jeffrey Barrett	
17	June Bartholomew	
18	Charles Beals	
19	Donald Beck	
20	Tom Beecroft	
*21	Dana Bell/Tom Getzfrid	American Motorcyclist Assoc., Dist. 37
22	Mindy/Dennis Belli	
23	Tom Bennett	San Bernardino Fish & Game Commission
24	Eleanor Berke	
25	Elliot Bernshaw	
26	Robert Billings	
27	Howard Blair	
28	Rob/Kate Blair	
29	Lielani Bland	
30	Daniel Bleiberg	
31	Karen Blomquist	
32	Eva Bluestein	
33	Wendy Blumberg	
34	The Bolotins	
35	Pete Bontadelli	California Department of Fish & Game
36	Dr/Mrs Victor Bradford	
37	Laura Brady	
38	F.E./Vivian Brant	
39	Thomas Briggs	National Speleological Society, Western
40	" "	Region (two letters)
41	William Brooks	
42	Ken & Ellen Bunting	
*43	Peter Burk	Citizens for Mojave National Park
*44	Joyce Burk	
45	Jeremy Burnham	
46	Russell Butcher	National Parks & Conservation Assoc.
*47	George Byers	Santa Fe-Pacific Minerals Corporation
48	Lisa Cagnolatti	Southern California Gas Company
49	Phillip Camitses	
50	Stephanie Campbell	
51	Holly Carlson	

52	Alan Carlton	
53	Huston Carlyle Jr	California Office of Planning
54	Judith Carroll	
55	Dennis Casebier	Friends of the Mojave Road
56	Michael Ceaser	
57	Leon Chauvet	California Dept of Parks & Recreation
*58	Jayne Chavez-Scales	California Turtle & Tortoise Club
59	Helen/Henry Childs	
60	Cynthia Cilensk	
*61	Duffie Clemens	California Native Plant Society
*62	" "	Sierra Club - San Diego Chapter
63	Frank Cohen	
*64	Philippe Cohen	Granite Mountain Natural Reserve
65	Michael Colavito	
66	Benjamin Cole	
67	Patrick Colgan	Sierra Club, San Francisco Bay Chapter
68	Charles Conner	
69	Mr/Mrs Elwin Covey	
70	Wilma Curtis	
71	David Daniel	
72	Mary Bruce Delbruck	
73	Will Diehl	
74	Valena Dismukes	
75	Harold Dittmer	
76	Harry Drabkin	
77	David Drechsel	
78	Melvin/Martha Dresher	
*79	Anne Duffield	East Mojave Rock Art Recording Project
80	Ed Dunkley	California Assoc. of 4-Wheel Drive Clubs
81	Ruth Ehni	
82	Marion Ely III	
83	Henry Ervin	
84	Cliff Espy	
85	Donald Falk	Desert Survivors
86	Marc/Christoper Ferguson	
87	Thomas/Beatrix Ferguson	
88	Cynthia Flowers	
89	Mrs Warren Forgey	
90	Rochelle Fortier	
91	W. Paul Foster	
92	Beryl Fowlie	
93	Donald France	
94	Gerald Freeman	
95	John Fries	
96	Nelson Gardner	
97	Pablo Garza Jr	
98	Ruth Giese	
99	Yitzhak Gilon	
100	Helen Glosser	
101	Ruth Glunt	
102	Phillip Gordon	
*103	Gay Gotses	Wild Horse Organized Assistance
104	Sandy Gottlieb	
105	Katherine Gould-Martin	

106	Elaine Graffy	
*107	Wayne Guerrini	
108	Lieutenant Haley	California Highway Patrol
109	Liz Hamilton	
110	Jay Hammer	
111	Andrea Hannah	
112	George Harper	
113	Keith Harris	
114	Jon Harris	
115	Steven Hartman	
116	Stan Haye	
117	Christopher Haynes	
118	James/Cynthia Heimler	
119	Mary Ann Henry	
120	Jim Herman	
121	Javier Hernandez	
122	Kurt Herzog	
123	Phyllis Hill	
124	David Hite	
125	Mr/Mrs Samuel Hodnet	
126	Helene Hollingsworth	
127	Laura Holt	
128	Vicky Hoover	Sierra Club - San Francisco Bay Chapter
129	Mary Ann Horaj	
130	Carolyn Hoyman	
*131	Elden Hughes	Sierra Club - Angeles Chapter
132	Julia Hurn	
133	Robin Ives	
*134	Thomas Jackson	
135	Lynn Jacobs	
136	Bob Jaussaud	
137	William Jeffrey	
138	Bruce Jensen	
139	Edward Jikgil	
140	R N Johns	
141	Norman Johnson	
*142	Frederick Johnson	Inyo County Multiple Use Coalition
143	Timothy Joyce	
*144	Russell Kaldenburg	San Bernardino County - Planning Dept
145	" "	
146	Arlene Kallenberger	
147	Elizabeth Kallman	
*148	Robert Kanne	
149	Edward Karapetian	Los Angeles Dept of Water & Power
*150	William/Pat Koeling	
151	Purl Keen	
152	Richard Keller	
153	Richard/Eva Keller	
154	Albert Kelley	Serrano School
155	Doug/Elaine Kent	
156	John Knox	
157	Tom Koch	
158	W F Krause	
159	Lorraine/Walter Krum	

*160	Steve Kuehl	California Off-Road Vehicle Association
161	" "	Phantom Duck Club
162	Lidia Kuhm	
163	Lawrence LaPre	Audobon Society-San Bernardino
164	William Laden	
165	Robert Lamond	
166	Aurelie Langefort	
167	Valerie Laurence	
168	June Legler	San Jose State Univ, Dept of Geology
169	Larkette Lein	
170	Magda Lempart	
171	Neil Lienhard	
172	Phillip/Marilyn Lindberg	
173	Jim Livermore	
174	Mrs Russell Lune	
*175	Robert Maichle	Motorcycle Racing Association of Nevada
176	Nim Maida	
177	Kim Marchand	
178	Jorge Marin	
179	Valerie Mark	
180	Randall Martin	
181	William Matlock	Gold Fields Mining Corporation
182	Jim Matthew	
183	Paul Mattson	
*184	Bernie/Carol Mauldin	CA Federation of Mineralogical Societies
185	William Mautz	
186	Christine Mead	
187	Leroy Messick	
188	Julius Metis	
189	Harry Metzger	
190	Ray Miller	
191	Florence Miller	
192	John Miller	
193	Ezra Miller	
194	D L Miller	Southern California Edison Company
195	Jean Mingee	
196	Dorthy Morey	
197	Donald Morey	
198	Nick Morgan	
199	William/Peggy Morgan	
200	P K Morton	California Mining Association
201	James Mulkey Jr	Pfizer Minerals
202	Stanley Murphy	
203	Robert Muskel	
204	Alma Myers	
205	Donald Myers	
*206	Richard MacPherson	California Assn of 4WD Clubs, Inc
207	Bob McDowell	
208	James Mc Gee	
209	Thomas McGill	Dept of the Navy, Naval Weapons Center
210	Philip McGratt	
211	Daral McKee	
212	Susan Nash	
213	William Neill	The Desert Protection Council, Inc

214	Valerie Nestrick	
215	Tom Newsome	
216	Marie Noerdlinger	
217	Frank Norris	
218	Robert Norris	University of California,Santa Barbara
219	D W Nugent	
220	Linda Ny	
221	Dennis O'Bryant	California Division of Mines & Geology
222	John Okeefe	
223	Johanna Okeefe	
224	Norman Olive	
225	Jeffrey Opkepke	US Fish and Wildlife Service
*226	Gregory Ouellette	Western Mining Council, Inc
227	Gary/Linda Overson	
228	T C Packard	
229	James Palm	
230	Mary Parsell	
231	Melvin Pedvin	
232	Ruth Pedvin	
233	Cheryl Pelletier	
234	Jaime Perez	
235	Georgia Petrie	
236	George Pfeiffer	
237	Thomas Plichta	
238	Lorraine Potter	
239	Tim Potts	
240	Pat Preiopan	
241	Craig Priest	
242	Sara Prieto	
243	Daniel Pritchett	
244	Terry Radimaker	
245	Eric Ramm	
246	Robert Ramsay	
247	Richard Rayburn	California Dept. of Parks & Recreation
248	Helen Real	
249	Linda Redman	
250	Giovanni Reola	
251	Robert/Jennifer Reynolds	
252	Robert Reynolds	San Bernardino County Museum
253	Shirley Reynolds	
254	Elizabeth Ridgely	
255	Michael Rilla	
256	Susan Ring	
257	Connie Rodriguez	
258	Mary Lou Rosczyk	
259	Rick Russell	Gold Fields Mining Corporation
260	Harold Sanders	
261	Dwight Sanders	California State Lands Commission
262	Jerry Schad	
*263	Gerald Scherba	Desert Studies Consortium
264	Patricia Schifferle	The Wilderness Society
265	David Schneider	
*266	R W Scott	
267	Richard Seely	

268	Peter Shapely	
269	Dr Wesley Shelberg	
270	Stephen Shoemaker	
271	Susan Shore	
272	Cheryl Short	
*273	Scott Simons	Sierra Club-Mojave Group
274	Robert Simpson	
275	Allison/Greg Smith	
276	Shirley Sniderman	
277	Gordon Snow	Resources Agency, State of California
278	Jane Southcott	
*279	Richard Spotts	Defenders of Wildlife
280	Dr/Mrs Daniel Steinberg	
281	Maria/Robert Steinburg	
282	Jack Stern	
283	Glenn Stewart	Desert Tortoise Council
284	Don Strachan	
285	Rose Strickland	Sierra Club-Toiyabe Chapter
286	Tom Suk	
287	Robert Suszek	
288	Lee Swanberg	
289	John Swanson	
290	Carmelita Swarts	San Diego Mineral & Gem Society, Inc
*291	Mary Swedelius	Desert Protective Council
292	Matt Sweeney	
293	Paul Tanney	
294	Michael Tarbet	
295	Jerul Tare	
296	Kenneth Taylor	
297	Julia Thomas	
298	Jana Thompson	
299	Diane Thompson	
300	Vance Tracy	
301	Marsha Trimble	
302	Wilbur Twining	
303	Petra Uhrig	
304	Maria Velka	
305	Gary Vesperman	
306	Michael Viena	
307	Guy Visbal	California Dept of Transportation
308	Col Gerald Volloy	HQ 831st Combat Support Group(TAC)
*309	Edward Waldheim	California Dept of Parks & Recreation
310	Duane Waler Jr	
311	Melany Walker	
312	Marguerite Ware	
*313	Stanely Watowich	Gold Fields Mining Corporation
314	Hazel Weaver	
315	Patrick Wecker	
316	Scott Weston	
317	Gertrude/Andrea Wettstein	
318	Dr/Mrs Francis Wheat	
319	Alan White	
320	Carol Wiley	
321	Christa Wilk	

322	Dwight Willard	
323	James Williams	Specialty Vehicle Institute of America
324	H G Wilshire	
325	Waite Wynekoop	
326	Lee Ziegler	
327	Nina Zolter	

*These individuals/organizations also made statements at the ten public meetings held in July and September 1987.

TABLE 5 INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING ORAL COMMENTS AT PUBLIC MEETINGS

Timothy Baggerly	
Pamela Barker	unidentified Horse Club
Rick Bates	CORVA
Steve Bimson	
Howard Brown	
Conrad Burrell	
Ann Cranshaw	
Darryl Dickey	
Phyllis Doffins	
Jim Eaton	Wilderness Coalition
Susan Ellsworth	AMA
Casey Folks	
Gary Freedman	
Kathy French	
Carlos Galleger	
Gary Gater	
Earl Giddings	
Jim Hass	Sierra Club
Daniel Hauptmann	
Tim Hinshaw	
Jim Hoffman	
Harold Hoffman	
Dave Holmwood	Searchers Gem & Mineral Club
Jim Howard	
Stan Jessip	
Paul Joseph	
T E Keeling	
David Krumbine	
Jerry Lipscomb	
Alice Lux	Searchers Gem & Mineral Club
Clark McKinney	Sierra Club
Richard Melvin	
Chris Mitchell	
Charles Morgan	
Tom Murch	
Dennis Murray	
Jo Noble	
Don Noble	
Tru Pallette	
Harry Pappas	Nevadans for a Practical Wilderness
Walter Powell	Southern Council of Conservation Clubs
Bob Rasch	
Jim Rasor	
Luke Sahala	
Dave Scott	
Jim Shain	
Burnie Smith	
Lowell Spotts	Defenders of Wildlife
Fred Stearn	
Mark Trinko	Nevada Off Highways Users
Bob Vernoy	

Dave Vogel
Victor Warren
Alma Wilkerson
Jim Worthington

Draft Plan Comments and Responses

Introduction

The following analysis of comments received is organized along the same pattern as the draft plan. Comments pertaining to access, mining, grazing and so forth have been excerpted from the complete letter and reproduced as a group to allow a better grasp of the range of opinion expressed by the public on various elements of the plan. Because of the large number of comments (totalling over 1,000 pages), not every letter received by BLM is excerpted below. Several BLM specialists and managers knowledgeable about the Scenic Area read each letter and chose extracts which made a specific point or asked questions requiring a response. Because many commenters made similar statements, excerpts giving the range of opinion were chosen for reproduction, particularly those that contained justification for their statements.

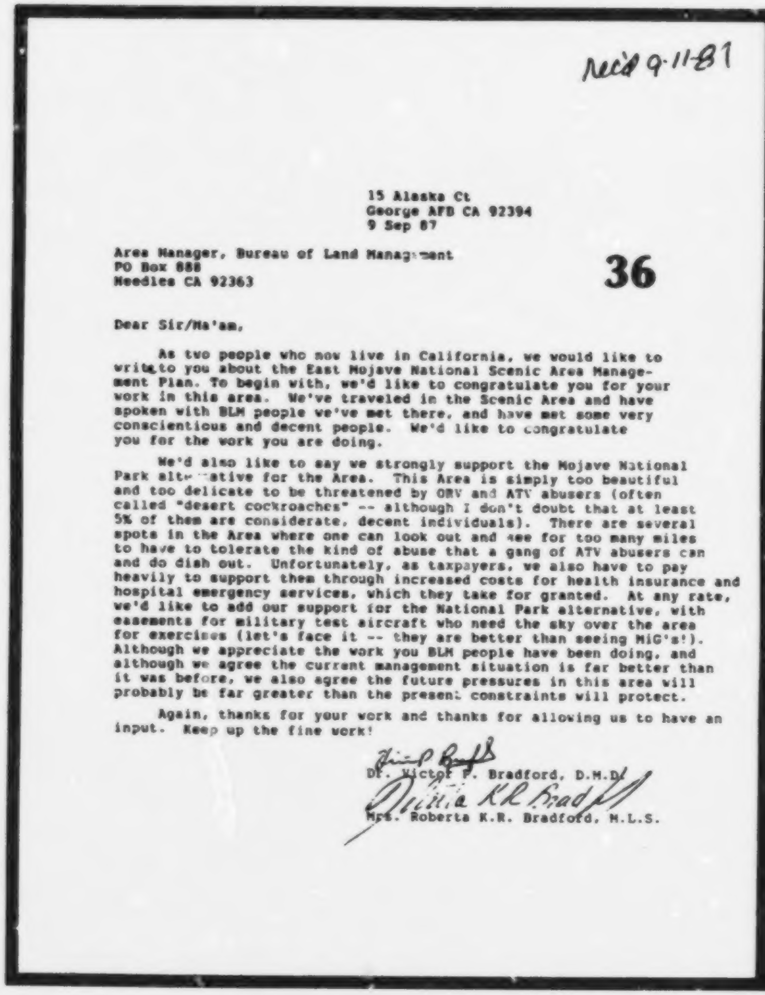
Several letters contained a detailed page-by-page analysis of the draft plan. Suggestions for word changes, improved definitions, or error corrections were usually adopted for the Final Plan. BLM acknowledges the assistance provided by these commenters, but for the sake of clarity does not reproduce these comments unless the error or requested change altered the rationale or justification for planned actions. Letters from the following individuals/organizations were particularly helpful:

Harriet Allen	
Judy Anderson	Sierra Club - Southern California Regional Conservation Committee
Dana Bell	American Motorcyclist Association -District 37
Russ Butcher	National Parks and Conservation Association
Philippe Cohen	Manager, Granite Mountain Natural Reserve
Wayne Guerrini	
William/Pat Keeling	
Steve Kuehl	California Off-Road Vehicle Association
Robert Maichle	Motorcycle Racing Association of Nevada
Dick MacPherson	California Association of 4-Wheel Drive Clubs
Bob McDowell	
Gerald Scherba	Desert Studies Consortium (Univ. of California)
R.W. Scott	
Scott Simons	Sierra Club - Mojave Group
Glenn Stewart	Desert Tortoise Council

Several letters discussed issues more than specific actions addressed by the draft plan. Table 6 summarizes the concerns stated in these "quasi-form" letters, and some examples are reproduced on the following two pages. The points raised by these letters are addressed in responses to comments on specific sections of the draft plan and EA.

TABLE 6 SUMMARY OF STATEMENTS MADE IN "QUASI-FORM" LETTERS

Comment	Times Mentioned
Park-like protection/management should be provided	66
Eliminate grazing from the Scenic Area	27
Eliminate grazing from special areas in the Scenic Area	29
Reconsider grazing allocations and special restrictions	20
Eliminate mining from the East Mojave	40
Eliminate mining from special areas in the East Mojave	18
Restrict sand, gravel, and cinder mining	7
Prohibit the discharge of firearms throughout the area	30
Allow hunting, prohibit target shooting	14
Restrict hunting/shooting to designated areas	23
Allow camping in designated areas only	25
Do not locate camping areas in sensitive locations/day use areas	39
Recommend all wilderness study areas for designation	30
Eliminate (instead of limit) the use of all-terrain vehicles	31
Eliminate all unlicensed vehicles	21
Provide greater clarifications on vehicle use restrictions	31
Provide better protection for Cima Dome, Cinder Cones areas by restricting grazing and mining	29



Rec'd 9-11-87

15 Alaska Ct
George AFB CA 92394
9 Sep 87

Area Manager, Bureau of Land Management
PO Box 888
Needles CA 92363

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Dear Sir/Ma'am,

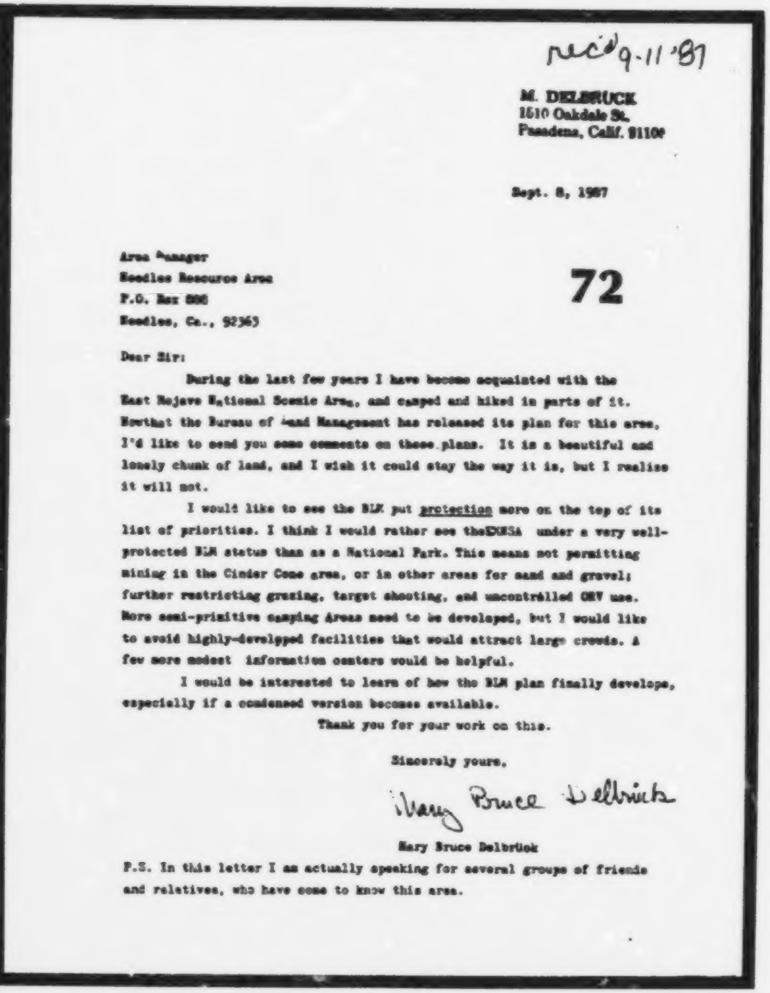
As two people who now live in California, we would like to write to you about the East Mojave National Scenic Area Management Plan. To begin with, we'd like to congratulate you for your work in this area. We've traveled in the Scenic Area and have spoken with BLM people we've met there, and have met some very conscientious and decent people. We'd like to congratulate you for the work you are doing.

We'd also like to say we strongly support the Mojave National Park alternative for the Area. This Area is simply too beautiful and too delicate to be threatened by ORV and ATV abusers (often called "desert cockroaches" -- although I don't doubt that at least 5% of them are considerate, decent individuals). There are several spots in the Area where one can look out and see for too many miles to have to tolerate the kind of abuse that a gang of ATV abusers can and do dish out. Unfortunately, as taxpayers, we also have to pay heavily to support them through increased costs for health insurance and hospital emergency services, which they take for granted. At any rate, we'd like to add our support for the National Park alternative, with easements for military test aircraft who need the sky over the area for exercises (let's face it -- they are better than seeing MiG's!). Although we appreciate the work you BLM people have been doing, and although we agree the current management situation is far better than it was before, we also agree the future pressures in this area will probably be far greater than the present constraints will protect.

Again, thanks for your work and thanks for allowing us to have an input. Keep up the fine work!

Dr. Victor P. Bradford, D.M.D.

Roberta K R Bradford
Mrs. Roberta K.R. Bradford, M.L.S.



rec'd 9-11-'87

M. DELBRUCK
1510 Oakdale St.
Pasadena, Calif. 91106

Sept. 8, 1987

Area Manager
Needles Resource Area
P.O. Box 888
Needles, Ca., 92363

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Dear Sir:

During the last few years I have become acquainted with the East Mojave National Scenic Area, and camped and hiked in parts of it. Now that the Bureau of Land Management has released its plan for this area, I'd like to send you some comments on these plans. It is a beautiful and lonely chunk of land, and I wish it could stay the way it is, but I realise it will not.

I would like to see the BLM put protection more on the top of its list of priorities. I think I would rather see the EMNSA under a very well-protected BLM status than as a National Park. This means not permitting mining in the Cinder Cone area, or in other areas for sand and gravel; further restricting grazing, target shooting, and uncontrolled ORV use. More semi-primitive camping Areas need to be developed, but I would like to avoid highly-developped facilities that would attract large crowds. A few more modest information centers would be helpful.

I would be interested to learn of how the BLM plan finally develops, especially if a condensed version becomes available.

Thank you for your work on this.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Bruce Delbrück

Mary Bruce Delbrück

P.S. In this letter I am actually speaking for several groups of friends and relatives, who have come to know this area.

[comment 1]

rec'd
9-11-87

September 9, 1987

111

Area Manager
Needles Resource Area
P.O. Box 888
Needles, CA 92363

Dear Person:

It is really encouraging to see what has been put together for the Eastern Mojave National Scenic Area. The hard work done on the Plan is greatly appreciated.

I have some real concern, however, in connection with some of the "interests" who may oppose or seek to drastically modify this excellent Plan. I do, therefore, ask that consideration be given to the inclusion of an alternative of park--or parklike--protection for the Area, as a general protective measure. I also strongly urge that it be required that all vehicles traveling through the area be street licensed! The ATV restriction is good. Let's go even further as off-road vehicles do just that, often whether allowed or not. I also feel there is great need for very specific (and strictly enforced) restrictions on target shooting--a few limited areas only. I also urge that no mining be permitted in the area. I am especially concerned about the mining of cinders around the Cones and the mining of sand and gravel in general.

In connection with grazing, none should be allowed in the Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, nor on the Kelso Dunes. If grazing is affecting the Desert Tortoise, it should be restricted.

I have head it suggested that there be an Interpretive Center/Museum at the old Kelso Depot, a place I love. Please consider such an idea--there is a fascinating heritage in that old place. Please preserve it for our children who can't any longer see it in action (or pass the time of day with the postmistress on her front porch by the tracks).

I love best camping out of campgrounds--but there must be more such established if we are to preserve the area for everyone's enjoyment. Camping should be strictly prohibited in Caruthers Canyon, Rock Cree, Fort Piute.

I strongly support the funding of studies to protect our cultural resources. The best protection of our precious archeological sites is of course inaccessibility to vehicles, best ensured by wilderness designations. Sites which are accessible anyway should be turned into interpretive sites (like Kelso Depot) with a significant full time ranger presence.

Thank you for keeping me informed regarding the Eastern Mojave National Scenic Area--one of my favorite places. Please continue to do so!

Sincerely,

Andrea Hannah

Andrea Hannah
75 Monterey Rd., South Pasadena, CA 91731

C.D.D. N… EA
Routing … Inits
TO:
AM
Res
Sec
ES
OR
VS
Wild
CR

280

Sept. … 1987

M & R Steinberg
711 Muskingum Av
Pacific Palisades
CA 90272

To the BLM Area Ranger
Needles Resource Area
P O Box 888 Needles

Dear Sir:

These are our comments to the East Mojave Scenic Area Draft Plan. We have visited the EM scenic area many times and consider it one of the natural treasures of the Western Desert. Granite Mountain, Kelso Dunes & Depot, Fort Piute, Big Horn Sheep and all the rest of the mountains and canyons. So this is to urge you to protect the natural uniqueness of the area from destruction.

We support increased restriction on mining and grazing. No mining of cinders, gravel and sand. Protection of the ACEC's from both mining and grazing.

We support all vehicle closures and want to see ORV's eliminated from the fragile desert areas. We know that ATV groups are well organized and will exert the appropriate pressures on your office. Their aims are short term : Drive and enjoy, but do not worry about the long term destructive effects. Your office must think of the long term. The time when ORV's will be out of fashion, but the desert will still be there under your protection. The destruction by ORV's however is permanent.

We want to see all target shooting, plinking and hunting radically checked and policed. It is not enough to eliminate these activities near campgrounds. They pose a danger in the whole EM area. The debris from shooting is ugly and dangerous to wildlife. Vandalizing of the area goes hand in hand with shooting.

We would like to see more protection for cultural and archeological areas like Fort Piute from selfish exploiters.

Please think of the long term effects on the area. We very much hope that the Mojave National Park will be created and then the area should be as well preserved as possible. Therefore we hope that preservation will carry the day over exploitation.

Truly Yours

Maria Steinberg
Robert Steinberg
Maria & Robert Steinberg

August 19, 1987 **305**

[illegible] AUG 24 [illegible] 24

Gary Vesperman
3123 Trueno Road
Henderson, NV 89014-3617

BLM Area Manager
Needles Resource Area
PO Box 888
Needles, CA 92363

Gentlepersons:

Please include the following comments in the public record for the draft East Mojave National Scenic Area:

I have hiked and traveled around and through the East Mojave National Scenic Area about ten times. It's a magnificent desert worthy of preserving, within reason, for all time.

Alternative A, BLM's preferred alternative, is a capitulation of the BLM in favor of those few whose greed and shortsightedness has blinded the BLM's unprofessional managers to the broader interests of the national public and of future generations. The National Park Service has a much more professional staff than the BLM for managing public lands. So therefore, the Mojave National Park alternative is the only sensible alternative.

Urban development is the road to ruin for the sensitive habitats and lands of the East Mojave. I support the acquisition of 144,000 acres of private and state school lands.

I have camped at Hole-in-the-Wall campground. It's a nice campground, but I question the BLM's policy of locating campgrounds in key wildlife habitat or scenic attractions. This is an example of where the National Park Service follows a more professional policy than the BLM.

Target shooting should be banned from all BLM lands. Private and public shooting ranges are available for practicing shooting under supervised safe conditions.

Having seen some sorry examples of damage to public lands by all-terain vehicles, jeeps, motorcycles, etc., I heartily encourage the BLM to eliminate all cross-country ORV use. The BLM shou block Roads that vandals use to steal and deface petroglyphs, pictographs, and other such treasures. Hikers and other elitists are usually much more public-spirited.

The existing cattle grazing leases should not be renewed. Cattlemen should be taken off public welfare. The range improvements are frequently scenic eyesores. The damage to sensitive wildlife habitats is not worth the cost. Cattle can be easily grown elsewhere.

All 1.5 million acres should be withdrawn from mineral entry. The vast majority of mining activities is amateurish and unproductive.

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The BLM needs more funding for enforcement of existing laws and for acting against miners, grazers, OHVers and target shooters.

Sincerely,

Gary Vesperman

General Comments

144 [Russell Kaldenburg, San Bernardino County Planning Department]
"Provide a glossary of terminology common to Public Land Administration. Particularly useful would be definitions of various laws including locatable, leasable, and saleable minerals, grazing base property, ACEC, etc.

Provide citations for hard data found throughout the Plan. Include sources for items such as the deer take emanating from the East Mojave, trends in recreational use, grazing allotment yield, mining claims, etc."

Response:

A glossary of terms has been added to the Final Plan as Appendix J, and references added where needed.

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8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club - SCRCC]
"We found numerous inconsistencies between the boxed entry description and the justification paragraph [in Part 2]. There was excessive redundancy which did little to enlighten, and in most cases confused, the presentation."

Response:

The inconsistencies referred to have been corrected. The "redundancy" in the plan was designed to allow a reader to quickly locate sections of interest.

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5 [Harriet Allen]
"The [management plan] does not contain a legal definition of "scenic area" nor criteria. The Executive Summary skirts the issue with apparently-adopted goals, etc. Please include in the Final EA, the legal definition of a "scenic area" and the date of its adoption and publication in the Federal Register."

Response:

The National Scenic Area designation given to the East Mojave was the first of its kind for public lands managed by BLM. Appendix A of this plan reproduces the Federal Register Notice of the designation, and Appendix B, the statement of management philosophy which the Secretary of the Interior directed the Bureau to prepare so as to inform the public what the designation implied. There is no other "legal" definition that applies to this designation. Since then, Congress has designated "National Forest Scenic Areas," but definitions and management guidelines contained in the authorizing legislation for each do not apply to the East Mojave.

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209 [Thomas McGill, China Lake Naval Weapons Center]
"The Naval Weapons Center staff has reviewed the Draft Management Plan for the East Mojave National Scenic Area and offers the following comment. We find that the Plan is compatible with the military's presence in the Mojave Desert

provided that the plan includes a caveat regarding military overflights. Such a caveat should be similar to that included in the 1980 California Desert Conservation Area Plan.

The following statement is suggested language for a caveat:

> "The overflights of military aircraft at low levels over designated portions of the East Mojave National Scenic Area are expected. This intrusion is not considered sufficiently detrimental to warrant classifying military overflights as incompatible with the management of the East Mojave National Scenic Area."

246 [Robert Ramsay]
"All aircraft should be restricted to elevations above ten thousand feet. Sight-seeing and private aircraft should not be allowed to fly overhead at low altitudes."

Response:

The issue of aircraft overflights in the East Mojave is not within the scope of this management plan. Since the East Mojave is an integral part of the California Desert Conservation Area, policy on aircraft in the Desert Plan applies also to the East Mojave.

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325 [Waite Wynekoop]
"I have a few questions, comments and suggestions concerning the East Mojave National Scenic Area. Firstly, why was the Budweiser Wash designated as the western boundary of the scenic area? It seems to me that the Bristol and Cady Mountains are as scenic and pristine as any mountains within the scenic area. I would like to see the scenic area enlarged to ensure protection of these areas also."

207 [Bob McDowell]
"Those lands which were deleted from EMNSA in the triangle between Kokoweef, I-15 and Clark Mountain-Mescal Range, 47,000 acres deleted by [Desert Plan] amendment, should be restored to EMNSA. These lands include the Dinosaur Trackway ACEC, and some very fine scenery in that area. It was arbitrarily removed from EMNSA, and should be rightfully restored to the area."

289 [John Swanson]
"I favor enlarging this East Mojave National Scenic Area to include a total of at least 2,360,000 acres, with a dedicated wilderness of about 2,255,000 acres and with this enlarged area dedicated by Congress as the East Mojave National Park,...as this entire area certainly will qualify as a major National Park."

Response:

The decision on boundaries of the Scenic Area was based on several factors, including manageability, use patterns, boundaries of the earlier "Eastern Mojave Recreation Lands" designation, and popular opinion on what regions were included in the admittedly ambiguous East Mojave area of the California Desert. A larger area was contemplated, but rejected, in order to eliminate power line corridors or areas which had not traditionally been thought of as the East Mojave. The 1982 Desert Plan Amendment was very carefully considered, with the final decision being to delete a much smaller area than originally proposed. The triangle of land deleted from the Scenic Area contains the nationally significant Mountain Pass mining area, and associated mining claims which are expected to be intensively developed over the next several years.

Comments Pertaining to specific Sections of the Draft Plan/EA .

Part 1: Introduction

Purpose and Need

6 [Margaret Allender, California Mining Association]
"...we find no provisions in FLPMA or the CDCA Plan which requires an alteration of land use patterns from those of the Desert Plan. There is no statutory or environmental requirement to establish parameters as outlined in this proposal for the East Mojave area which would so severely impact mining and limit the opportunities for mineral development."

Response:

The Desert Plan was designed to be flexible enough to allow "changes in the face of unanticipated demands or responses to future events that, as yet, cannot be foreseen." (Desert Plan, page 143). The actions that will have the greatest effect on mining will be given a thorough analysis in the Desert Plan Amendment process (for A-1), and by the preparation of detailed mineral reports (for A-5,6, and 7).

5 [Harriet Allen]
"Planning for ten years does not meet the Congressional mandate to plan for future generations...ten years is about one third of one generation."

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"Poor identification of the planning period made evaluating some of the entries very difficult. We finally found the ten-year notation located on p. 128. Other entries in the plan lead to different conclusions. For example, the budget is listed for 1988-1992. Calculations of the rate at which some actions are planned means that they will not be completed for 30 years. The Mojave Road plan expires in 1996. No information exists on how it or any other portion will be revised, reviewed, or updated. Actions which are appropriate for a 10 year plan may not be appropriate for other periods.

Response:

Planning efforts of this scale are generally for a 10-20 year period, recognizing that our ability to predict specific issues and needs is subject to great uncertainty beyond that time. Planning period references have been corrected in the Final Plan to represent the period from fiscal year 1988 through 1997. The plan, its implementation priorities, and any needed changes will be reviewed annually (see rationale for Action P-1).

Management Philosophy

285 [Rose Strickland, Sierra Club - Toiyabe Chapter]
"It appears to us from the draft Plan that the Bureau does not have a clear understanding of what the Scenic Area is and how the management of a Scenic Area is different from that of other public lands. The draft Plan instead attempts to provide for maximum recreational and commodity uses of the area, with little or no attention given to actions which would conserve the beauty and scenic values of the Scenic Area. We don't think anyone is arguing that the Scenic Area should not be used, but instead that its many uses should not detract from the natural qualities which made it a Scenic Area in the first place."

38 [F.E./Vivian Brant]
"In general we can agree with the intent and methods of this management plan. However, we believe that "status quo" with good informative posting and adequate policing is actually all that is needed."

91 [W. Paul Foster]
"...the plan itself does not set forth a philosophy or set of basic principles. It should have. That basic tenet or philosophy should set forth as comprehensively as possible the BLM's firm commitment to preserving the Mojave from development or destruction through overuse (or improper use)."

263 [Gerald Scherba, Desert Studies Consortium]
"In overall assessment, the plan is well organized, well written, carefully researched and contains sufficient detail to support many of the proposals. There is something in the plan for just about everyone: miners; shooters; grazers; recreationists; orv'ers and eventually hikers. And it is this "something for everyone" message that is the Plan's most serious limitation. The plan falls short in making the hard decisions, based on value judgments, that some activities or uses are more important than other, and some are inappropriate because they take place in a Scenic Area. For example, can you have widespread shooting and "an opportunity for solitude" (p162); can you have spectacular wild flower displays (p148) and permit cattle grazing in the Kelso Dunes; can you encourage mineral extraction (p25) and still protect other natural resources? The plan would benefit by making some of these hard choices."

Response:

Several comments were received that pertain to this section of the plan. Those excerpted above give a good sample of the key points raised. BLM agrees that the East Mojave is not suitable for all uses or users, and has taken steps in this plan to provide appropriate limits on use. These limits are consistent with the Management Philosophy Statement prepared in 1981 with a great deal of public input, and the Secretarial order designating the Scenic Area. The limits are also consistent with Federal and State laws which constrain BLM from taking certain actions, such as mining laws established by Congress, and State regulations on firearm use. Nevertheless, the Scenic Area plan when implemented will provide for significant protection of the key areas on which the region's reputation is based, and put limits on the degree of development which can occur in the East Mojave.

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264 [Patricia Schifferle, Wilderness Society]
"...In addition the plan does not comply with the Secretary of the Interior's order of January 13, 1981 which required the Bureau of Land Management to develop a "plan to protect the area's outstanding natural, scenic and cultural resources.
Furthermore, we believe the proposed plan violates the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, which requires the BLM to protect the [California Desert Conservation Area's] outstanding natural, scenic and cultural resources and to ... protect Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and protect wilderness study areas until Congress makes a determination as to which areas should be designated as wilderness."

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"The first management goal requires a commitment of resources, both financial and [in] personnel, on the part of the entire BLM, not just the Needles Resource Area. How does adoption of this plan imply that level of commitment from the agency?

The Secretarial Order does not specify a balance, but a bias in favor of protection. It does not imply that public enjoyment is to come at the risk of destroying the resources.

Only goal five is fully consistent with the order designating the area. That order should take precedence over other management directions.

Management goals four and six to maintain the current camping policy are inappropriate. The increased visitor use already identified can no longer be adequately handled by dispersing visitors and withholding development of campgrounds. Perhaps the visitor levels experienced for the past 50 years could be handled by this method, but it is no longer true.

One of the canons of land use planning is to contain damaging use. The plan should limit damaging use to a small number of areas and control the damage in those areas. A dispersed approach will allow neither control nor containment, in direct conflict with the Secretarial Order to protect the area.

Much as the Forest Service in southern California has had to modify its traditional goal from harvesting trees to retaining them for scenic values, the BLM must modify it traditional goals.

These goals should include a commitment to enforce BLM regulations and prosecute those who do not comply. The statement in goal six to provide example and stipulation is very weak.

Goal seven should be enlarged to include non-BLM initiated actions as well. Also it would be appropriate to mention adequate bonding to assure that the required (p.3) "reclamation and restoration" will occur."

Response:

Dispersing recreation use does not necessarily mean over a broad area - it is an established practice when developing camping areas or other moderate-to intensive use sites to separate users from sights and sounds of others, if practical. The goals for the Scenic Area are not incompatible with the need to provide additional developments as use increases. The goals reflect a strong desire by BLM (and by many members of the public consulted during this planning effort) to retain the opportunity for a primitive, backcountry experience.

The balance of use with protection will always be controversial, particularly for an agency like BLM which is mandated by law to provide for multiple use with sustained yield. A careful reading of the Scenic Area plan will uncover a diligent effort to provide for that balance, albeit not by recommendations for additional wilderness areas or overly strict regulations that would deny use of the area to people who have enjoyed the region for several years.

The Secretarial order (Appendix A in the Scenic Area plan) made no mention of additional planning needs for the East Mojave. It stated that "...designation as the East Mojave National Scenic Area will provide added emphasis to the Bureau of Land Management's [Desert] plan to protect the area's outstanding natural, scenic and cultural resources." Implementation of the Scenic Area plan will further the protective efforts already established by the Desert Plan for East Mojave.

Location and Setting
Geographic Areas
History

These sections received a few comments, which usually requested clarification or minor corrections. Changes have been made in the final plan in response to these requests.

Major Issues and Management Objectives

Several significant comments proposing major modifications were directed towards this section of the draft plan. However, virtually all were not proposing changes in objectives so much as changes in planned actions that would achieve the objective. Three objectives have been modified as a consequence of public review: 7 - Vegetation, 10 - Mineral Development, and 12 - Fire Management. A twelfth issue/objective has been added concerning non-mineral developments. To facilitate review of the issues raised by these comments, they have been addressed below under the appropriate resource heading.

Relationship to Other Documents and Decisions

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"The absence of a proposal for a National Scenic Area in the draft and final EIS prepared for the Desert Plan in 1980 has left most of the 40,000 people who commented on it out of planning for the Scenic Area. The limited distribution of this proposal illuminates the declining numbers of the general public reached by BLM. Public opinion polls conducted during the preparation of the Desert Plan and subsequently, all of which show an overwhelming support for wilderness and parks and preservation, should be included in the absence of extensive public comment on this plan."

Response:

Throughout the preparation and review of the Desert Plan and EIS, the East Mojave's significant resource value was acknowledged and factored into the decision making process. The Scenic Area designation added at the end of the process did not add any additional management restrictions, but simply identified what was already there. When approving the designation, the Secretary of the Interior directed that BLM develop a statement explaining what a Scenic Area was and how it was to be managed. BLM developed this statement with assistance from major organizations and user groups, including the Sierra Club, mining groups, residents of the East Mojave, OHV groups, etc.
The draft Scenic Area plan, as stated in the introduction to this section, was distributed to over 1,500 individuals and organizations representing the whole range of interest groups in California.

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264 [Patricia Schifferle, Wilderness Society]
"Many of the Wilderness Study Areas are placed under the limited use category and would be subject to virtually the same management prescriptions as the moderate use category. Clearly such management prescriptions will introduce incompatible uses and damage wilderness values. For example, off road vehicle use in such areas is allowed by merely obtaining a permit from the BLM."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"We are not in agreement with the quantity of lands designated WSA or the "recommended [suitable]" WSAs. Additional class "L" areas need further discussion. We don't agree on the Class "C" areas."

Response:

Decisions on wilderness study area (WSA) suitability were made by the 1980 Desert Plan. Until Congress makes its decisions, all WSAs in the California Desert District will be managed according to the "Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review," or "limited" multiple use class guidelines, whichever are stricter. These guidelines do not allow management actions which would impair the WSAs' suitability for wilderness designation. All WSAs in the Scenic Area recommended nonsuitable by BLM will be managed as wilderness if so designated by Congress; if not designated, they would be returned to "limited" multiple use management (Class L).

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5 [Harriet Allen]
"The BLM has had ample opportunity to recommend and establish National Natural and Cultural Landmarks. These designations do not appear to be included in the [Scenic Area plan], nor are any proposed."

138 [Bruce Jensen]
"For areas of critical environmental concern, it seems as though your policy should be, based on the loosest definition of the title, that no activities other than the most passive viewing or photography should be allowed in the area. No mineral prospecting or extraction, no grazing, no operation of vehicles off roads should be allowed..."

Response:

Special area designations, including Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and National Landmarks, are referred to on pages 32-33 of the draft plan. No additional special area recommendations are made by the Scenic Area plan because the key areas of significance are already covered by various designations or are recommended suitable for wilderness designation. A review of all non-ACEC designations will be conducted to determine whether they meet the criteria for ACEC designation. A Desert Plan amendment would then be prepared to formally consider and approve additional designations.

Area of Critical Environmental Concern designations were made because of existing or highly likely conflicts between resources and resource use(s). It was never the intent of the ACEC program to resolve these conflicts simply by closing the area to use: protection would be achieved through additional management attention, including increased patrol, extra mitigation, and specifically tailored closures needed to resolve identified problems. Portions of several ACECs in the East Mojave are proposed for withdrawal from the mining laws, and vehicle use in all is restricted to designated routes of travel.

A. Land Classifications and Ownership

A-1 Change Multiple Use Class "M" to "L"

137 [William Jeffrey]
"We strongly support and are much heartened by the proposal to change the designation of 120,000 acres from moderate to limited. Thanks!"

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club - SCRCC]
"The Sierra Club supports changing all Class M to Class L, but note that the change to Class L according to the definition on page 28, does not call for balanced use but for protection. It is inconsistent with the goal outlined on page 4. Additionally we recommend that each of the preliminarily recommended Wilderness areas be placed under Class C management immediately and not wait for Congressional action. We have little confidence in Class L management guidelines to protect resources, but feel Class M can't be worse."

85 [Donald Falk, Desert Survivors]
"The proposed change of all Multiple Use Class M areas to Class L is another good first step. The special character of the East Mojave supports more restrictive classification of the Class L lands as well."

128 [Vicky Hoover, Sierra Club-San Francisco Bay Chapter]
"Your recommendation (plan, p. 34) of changing 120,000 acres from multiple use to limited use (L) is good, as a beginning, but the plan should add, that in years subsequent to 1988, further areas should be added to the L classification."

207 [Bob McDowell]
"The proposed change of multiple use class to class L from M is a positive step. There should be absolutely no class "M" or "I" lands within the Scenic Area. Class L, when applied as it was intended, provides a reasonable level of protection to non-wilderness lands. Class M allows the potential for move intensive development, which is inconsistent with what the EMNSA land use pattern should be.

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"We strongly support the proposal to change some 120,000 acres of the EMNSA from "moderate" to "limited" multiple use classification -- so that, among other enhanced protective management objectives, mining operators will be required to submit "plans of operation," rather than mere "notices of intent." This system has worked quite well, so far, in other BLM districts, such as the Arizona Strip; and at Death Valley National Monument."

82 [Marion Ely III]
"There is already too much Class L land in the CDCA. To create more only increases the paperwork and necessity for needless control and enforcement activities ... Conversely the policy should be to review the existing Class L lands to eliminate those that are not truly special. This would allow the focusing of resources and efforts to the truly unique areas that exist in the East Mojave that are in need of some protection. This would also allow more area for use of the public. The policy should be to increase the manageable areas where practice has shown most people will congregate anyway. This would lead to a greater efficiency of management and protection."

175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"MRAN objects to the plan to reclassify 120,000 acres from moderate to limited. The benefits gained by reducing potential impacts by mining and OHV's can be accomplished in other ways. The additional posting of designated routes is an expense that is not needed...."

133 [Robin Ives]
"We strongly disagree with the change of these lands from class "M" to class "L." Again we do not see any documentation of abuses in these areas and do not feel that a change is necessary."

160 [Steve Kuehl, CORVA]
"Changing of some of the land classifications to class "L" is wrong from our point of view. This area shows no need for further restrictions.

As you might expect, we are in complete disagreement with class "C" areas. This only hinders management of the area. Recommending Wilderness and Closed areas only shuts out those that cannot enjoy these sights from walking and horseback. We would support a limited route approach and class those areas now managed class "C" as a class "B" for Backcountry."

Response:

If the Desert Plan amendment proposed by A-1 is approved, all the East Mojave's public lands would be managed under "controlled" or "limited" multiple use class guidelines.

Wilderness study areas are currently managed under limited multiple use class or "Interim Management Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review" whichever are stricter. Management of WSAs under class L guidelines is not allowed by law and policy.

The change from class M to class L management will have little if any impact on route designations, since route closures in either case are driven by identified resource conflicts. There will be an additional burden on approximately five mining operators per year who would be required to file a Plan of Operation and possibly post a performance bond, instead of simply filing a Notice. This will increase the costs of mining somewhat, but not to an unreasonable extent. Such restrictions already apply to 90% of the Scenic Area, and have not created an undue burden to mining interests.

Several suitably recommended WSAs (proposed for class L management) have routes leading part way in to private land or old mining sites. BLM will recommend that these routes be left open to vehicle use, those roads would allow access to trail heads, rock hounding sites, and will, to a limited extent, provide the "back country" class suggested in comment 58.

A-2 through A-4 Land Tenure Adjustment

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"Buried on page 140 is one of the most important issues in proper management of the East Mojave National Scenic Area. To ignore development is to ignore what many feel is "the most serious threat facing the East Mojave," and court disaster. Sections of the document which might have addressed this issue did not. Acquisition of private parcels is discussed in relation to access but not commercial/residential development potential. Acquisition is directed toward state lands and critical tortoise habitat.

Private land problems are considered manageable by formation of a "partnership" with other owners and the county. That solution would be inadequate to address resort developments. However, permanent scenic easements on private lands would allow an owner to continue to use the lands in the same manner as they are now, and preclude massive resort development such as has occurred in other parts of San Bernardino County. Scenic easements which are not recorded on the deeds as deed restrictions are not worth the effort of securing the agreements. Reliance on County zoning cannot be considered adequate to address the problem. More than one residential development has been proposed for private lands inside the Scenic Area already.

The second aspect which was ignored is the effect of development surrounding the National Scenic Area. Again, the urbanization within the heart of San Bernardino National Forest occurred because of the failure of county constraints on rural development, and because the Forest Service thought it could manage its lands better by exchanging and blocking up its ownership and releasing its isolated parcels. The result was large blocks of private land available for massive scale development.

Development is occurring at a very rapid rate along the Colorado River. To think that developers will not cast an eye at a parcel of land identified as a "National Scenic Area" is to be naive in the extreme. The EMNSA will be vulnerable to pressure which accompanies such development proposals -- exceptions, zone changes, etc. The time to acquire the rights is NOW, before the opportunity is lost.

Failing to address these issues, a set of issues which forms much of the core of the Sierra Club's management concerns for the East Mojave makes the plan insupportable. It has been the aggressive work on the part of the environmental community which led to the identification of the area as a proposed National Park, differentiated management by BLM, and designation of a manager for the Scenic Area."

117 [Christopher Haynes]
"BLM should also work with those who do have private lands remaining in the area to resolve use conflicts with other users, and set down stringent guidelines as to the type of development that may take place. No development should alter the visual, wildlife, cultural, and natural values within the area."

Response:

Several actions in the Scenic Area plan address the issue of development of public lands, and to a lesser extent, private lands. Private/state land acquisition, purchase of scenic easements, mineral withdrawals, change of the East Mojave's class M lands to class L, adoption of strict visual management guidelines, and County interest in adopting new zoning guidelines for private land development in the Scenic Area are significant actions addressing the issue of development.

BLM will manage development outside the Scenic Area according to the appropriate multiple use guidelines and law. The agency has no intention of creating large blocks of private lands within the East Mojave, although such consolidation is possible outside the Scenic Area. The Needles Resource Area has not yet identified public lands it is willing to exchange. However, scattered parcels of public land in the South Coast Metropolitan Project Area (Los Angeles-San Diego inland areas); public lands in the Western Mojave Land Tenure Adjustment Plan; and unclassified public lands throughout the California Desert Conservation Area are currently available. Public lands elsewhere in California, and property owned by other agencies could also be considered for exchanges. The Scenic Area plan is not the appropriate forum for this issue - environmental assessments will be prepared at a later date when specific exchanges are proposed.

A-2 Land Acquisition

261 [Dwight Sanders, California State Lands Commission]
"We assume that your estimate of state school land ownership (62,000 acres) on page 100 of the draft includes lands owned or administered by other state agencies, such as the University of California. Thus the statement midway in the right hand column on that same page should be amended to indicate that only the school lands themselves are under the jurisdiction of the State Lands Commission. Another sentence should also be added regarding SLC's relation of mineral rights under existing private lands as well.

The Commission is obligated by law to manage the school lands to generate revenue for the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS); thus, we must object to your concept of management of the EMNSA for non-economic resources as long as state lands remain in the proposed EMNSA, such a policy would constitute an unacceptable diminution of the value of such lands to the State and to STRS.

Based on the foregoing and as noted in the draft, the Commission would, in general, favor an exchange program to eliminate any conflicts with your management of the EMNSA. We note that your proposed acquisitions in Table 2-3 include only 29,255 acres of State lands. Without more detail, we can neither determine whether that figure includes University lands, nor the basis on which that figure was reached. Likewise, we suspect that state owned mineral rights may underlie some of the 28,185 acres of private lands you propose to acquire.

Cash purchase of the surface of fee-owned school land constitutes a possible alternative for any parcels not suited for exchange. However, mineral rights in school lands cannot, by state law, be sold. The eminent domain process may be necessary to acquire mineral rights in school lands by purchase."

Response:

The statement concerning the jurisdiction of lands owned by the State of California appearing on Page 100 has been clarified and a statement included to acknowledge state ownership of minerals underlying certain private lands. Unless specific appropriations are made by Congress, the Bureau would not purchase State lands. The accepted method would be to exchange lands of equitable value, including all underlying minerals.

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47 [George Byers, Santa Fe-Pacific Minerals Corporation]
"The draft Plan recommends mineral and fee land exchanges in the EMNSA in order to consolidate federal ownership and eliminate the management problems caused by the presence of our private lands. Santa Fe Pacific will strive to work with BLM in order to exchange out of the EMNSA, and especially out of the wilderness study areas in the EMNSA, to the extent possible. As our personnel assess the mineral potential of the Company's lands in the EMNSA, we may conclude that it is not feasible or wise for us to exchange out of all lands. In addition, Santa Fe Pacific has a serious question as to whether BLM has sufficient unencumbered acreage in California of similar resource character which can be offered to Santa Fe Pacific to exchange for our lands in the EMNSA. One reason for our concern is that federal lands which we have been tentatively considering for selection are listed as lands which BLM plans to retain in the "Western Mojave Land Tenure Adjustment Project" draft EIS which was published by the BLM, Department of the Air Force, and San Bernardino County in July, 1987."

Response:

The Santa Fe Pacific lands identified for acquisition by the Bureau will be carefully analyzed for mineral potential and fair market value will be determined. The Bureau will offer lands of equal value, not necessarily of similar character. Those lands to be retained in public ownership within the Western Mojave Land Tenure Adjustment Project were judged necessary for national defense and public safety.

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8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club - SCRCC]
"Lands acquired should also be placed in Class L. At what point will an EA be prepared on lands being exchanged out to acquire these lands? The intent of the language "blocking up" meant that larger developments could take place. What is the purpose in blocking up land around grazing developments? Most grazing developments are pipelines, fences, corrals, or water development. Additional flexibility to acquire lesser priority lands if they become available for acquisition at reasonable prices should also be allowed.

There are several alternatives besides the 144,000 proposed, and all lands. What happens if lands not slated for acquisition become available? Will acquisition possibilities be ignored? This issue also needs better definition in the Land Adjustments section."

325 [Waite Wynekoop]
"I would like to have the Bureau of Land Management acquire all state and private lands within the scenic area. In spite of cost, this is the best option for the future. As visitation increases, user conflicts are bound to increase also. Urban development, which is contrary to all purposes of the scenic area, is bound to occur and ruin not only the pristine nature of the region but also its scenic value. If private lands within the scenic area are not acquired, all efforts to preserve this area are in vain."

207 [Bob McDowell]
"The acquisition of 144,000 acres of private and state lands is also positive. Every effort would be made to exchange those lands out of EMNSA, which will provide for better consolidation of public lands both inside and outside of the area."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"We do not support the use of public funds to acquire or "buy out" private lands in the EMNSA. In several specific cases, access to public lands is needed or a right of way is necessary for the public, but major purchases are not needed. (Realizing that some might occur on the Mojave Road where only right of way is needed.) We do support the Baker community needs on the south side of the freeway especially if the BLM can't get a dump site on the north side."

Response:

The Final Plan addresses the issue of multiple use classes for acquired lands. Assuming approval of A-1, all acquired land would be class C or L, and would be determined by the class surrounding the acquired parcel.

The Draft Plan described certain types of changes where public land in the Scenic Area may be traded for private lands also in the Scenic Area, mentioning grazing developments and towns. The final plan's policy statement on such inter-Scenic Area exchanges has been revised: such exchanges would very seldom meet BLM management objectives, and will be considered only when a clear benefit to the public would result.

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128 [Vicky Hoover, Sierra Club - San Francisco Bay Chapter]
"LAND ACQUISITION: planning to acquire further parcels of land and yet leaving them open to mineral development seems wasteful of public funds; why spend money to acquire them and yet leave them to be used for private profit? If mining is to be done there, it would be as well to leave them in private hands."

82 [Marion Ely III]
"This policy seems attractive on the face of it but therein is a special flaw. As was pointed out in the EIS for the 1980 Desert Plan, when the BLM acquires private lands they do not become public lands but instead become federal lands. The distinction is a legal one that removes those affected lands from application of the public land laws. The most striking of these impacts is that of the removal of mineral law, i.e. the mining laws do not apply. (This point was also not discussed in the EA.) Since many of the lands proposed for

swap are mineral containing, this fact should be considered. Present mineral review procedures are not adequate to assess this problem."

Response:

Private lands added to the public domain become public lands but are not subject to the public land laws until so opened by Secretarial Order published in the Federal Register as required by 42 C.F.R. 2200.3(a).

It has been BLM's policy in the East Mojave to defer the opening of acquired lands in suitably recommended wilderness study areas, and within areas withdrawn from mineral entry. The final plan contains a policy statement on this issue.

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58 [Jayne Chavez-Scales, California Turtle & Tortoise Club]
"Table 2-3. Priorities for Land Acquisition. Change M in Ivanpah Valley to H. After all, the Desert Tortoise is California's State Reptile."

283 [Glenn Stewart, Desert Tortoise Council]
"Land Acquisition: On Map B, we evaluated the private lands proposed for land acquisition. We are disappointed that a substantial portion of tortoise habitat is in the Low and Medium acquisition priorities. Fragmentation of tortoise habitat by different land uses is one of the key causes of severe declines in the western Mojave Desert. We request that you reexamine your acquisition priorities with regard to the tortoise and with regard to protecting the lower elevation ecosystems. Acquisition and blocking up of only small fragments of habitat in the Fenner Valley will not be sufficient to maintain tortoise populations in the long term."

22 [Mindy & Dennis Belli]
"We are concerned with the high priority given to acquiring the patented mines in the New York Mountains. What useful purpose can this serve? The area is not a WSA, it is an area of high mineral potential, and acquisition should not be used to halt mineral access."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"We do not agree on the priorities for land acquisitions much as we don't feel all the acquisition is needed. We certainly don't feel priority should be given to the Granite Mountains so more land can be locked down from public access by the UC system. Most of the WSA and tortoise habitat acquisition is silly. The Mojave Road seems to be the excuse for acquisition in several areas where it does not go?"

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"We support, for the most part, the proposed priorities for continued realty acquisitions/exchanges, as indicated on Land Acquisition Map-B. We question, however, two 640-acre Santa Fe Southern Pacific (Santa Fe) tracts, rated as Medium priority, that straddle the Kelbaker Road at and near the entrance to the EMNSA at I-40; and two other sections, rated as Low priority, just eastward of that junction. We urge that these four tracts be rated as High priority simply because of their sensitive situation at and near this EMNSA entrance and just south of the scenically outstanding Granite Mountains and Sheep Corral.

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There are also several Santa Fe tracts adjacent to the Black Canyon Road, one of which is immediately south of Hole-in-the-Wall. We urge that these also be given High priority. And there are several more such Santa Fe tracts in the vicinity of the Providence Mountains State Recreation Area which likewise merit High acquisition priority.

Even if a determination has been made that any or all of the above cited tracts are believed to contain a low development potential, we believe that the impact of development in these scenically sensitive places could be substantial. Therefore, we suggest that the risk of development should be avoided by acquisition and then by withdrawing those general areas from mineral entry."

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club - Mojave Group]
"I heartily concur with this proposed action. I do have a question on action A-2, Table 2-4. Some fairly large acreage in Mid Hills and near Wildhorse Canyon road is not slated for acquisition. This is an important area that is extensively visited because of the two nearby BLM campgrounds. Yet, numerous slices throughout the area will be left in private ownership. Why?

Then, too, numerous small slices along Watson Wash will not be acquired, and lands within the Woods and Hackberry Mountains will be retained by private owners. Again, the question is Why? Certainly, these are special landscapes, and could not possibly serve as visitor service areas."

Response:

Several questions arose concerning the selection process for acquisition in relationship to specific parcels and areas with high tortoise density or other specific resource values. Each BLM resource specialist submitted a prioritized list of lands within the East Mojave which they felt had high or sensitive resource values. The 140,000 acres identified for acquisition were selected from those areas which offered the most valuable, sensitive or threatened resources. If and as other parcels not recommended for acquisition within the East Mojave become available, they will be analyzed on a case by case basis and acquired if possible.

Many of the comments above concern the issue of how much private/state land should be acquired by BLM. ranging between "all or nothing". As stated in an earlier response, BLM resource specialists made recommendations based on known resource values. Also factored in were management conflicts, access needs, and development concerns. BLM acknowledges that those recommendations may have to change, since some owners of lands targeted for acquisition will not want to sell or exchange, while others holding property not identified for acquisition may want to do so. In the latter instance, BLM will make a case-by-case evaluation, using factors such as resource values and cost to make a decision whether to acquire the offered parcel.

A-3 Scenic Easements

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club - SCRCC]
"Agreements which are not registered on deeds as deed restrictions are not worth the paper they're prepared on. BLM should seek to purchase Scenic Easements just as they are purchasing Access Easements. The draft provision is too weak. Funding estimates are far too low to complete the work."

117 [Christopher Haynes]
"BLM should also insist on the right of condemnation for grossly damaging projects. They must have this clout as a deterrent to those who wish to undertake damaging projects, as well as to stop those whose actions have indicated undue damage will result from their activities."

Response:

The plan was revised to allow provisions for deeded scenic easements for sensitive private parcels which the Bureau will not be able to acquire. BLM does not have the right of condemnation for private lands in the East Mojave, nor will the agency ask for it from Congress. The partnership with private owners outlined in this section of the Plan, along with an aggressive land consolidation/acquisition program, will substantially reduce the risk of "grossly damaging" projects in the key regions of the East Mojave.

A-4 Memorandum of Agreement with County

144 [Russell Kaldenberg, San Bernardino County Planning Department]
"Among those issues which we feel that we could jointly discuss and resolve are transmission corridors, building setbacks, native plant harvesting, building designs which blend with the local scenic vistas, public access across private lands, parcel sizes, zoning districts, road needs and maintenance, development standards, scenic easements, and various mineral development standards.

Mechanisms to deal with these issues could include County ordinances, policies, development codes or changes to the text of the Consolidated General Plan. We would suggest that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing the procedures of implementing our common goals may be the most expedient means to start the process of working toward common land use objectives. Presently we have an MOU on Telecommunication Sites with the Bureau and are in the draft stage on one regarding Hazardous Waste sites. A comprehensive MOU on the Scenic Area, one that would compliment the County's role in the drafting of the Scenic Area's management philosophy should be timely and could provide a framework for both long term and current planning as the Bureau begins Plan implementation.

Land tenure adjustment is critical to the successful fulfillment of the goals and objectives of the Scenic Area Plan. Consistent with many of our General Plan objectives, we support the prioritized consolidation of the Bureau's land base. We recognize that this takes time, appropriate staffing and money and that the acquisition of 144,000 acres of private land is an enthusiastic goal. We look forward to working with the Bureau to resolve issues of mutual concern as your land acquisition program begins. It will be our job to work closely with private landholders as well as with the Bureau to help everyone meet mutual objectives."

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"The most important agreement that could be sought with San Bernardino County concerns zoning in the Scenic Area. Speculative developers are cutting properties into smaller and smaller parcels. A proposal by ADA Properties, for example, could still result in acreage along the Mojave Road being developed and subdivided. While this particular parcel is slated for acquisition under action A-2, the parcel might end up being subdivided before BLM can act.

The county should be urged to limit further subdivision in the Scenic Area to 640 acre parcels. Nothing smaller would really suit the prevailing goals of BLM in the Scenic Area. A proliferation of small parcels would complicate BLM's job, promote leapfrog development, increase the burden on the other county taxpayers to subsidize infrastructure development, and hurt the scenic qualities of the area. Then, too, such an action by the county would make BLM trade-out and acquisition more palatable to private speculators.

A possible compromise would be to examine prevailing ownership patterns in an area of EMNSA, and where a number of neighboring parcels were 160 acres, or 320 acres, those intermediate figures could be used as a guide for subdivision. But, generally, the 640 acre figure should prevail...
I will also note that the state school land sections in the Fenner and Lanfair Valleys have come under attack recently. Authorization has been sought for Mojave Yucca harvesting on some of these state school lands. Perhaps these lands should be added to the acquisition list, or at least a letter should be sent to the State Lands Commission requesting that Mojave Yucca harvesting on these lands be curtailed, and that other lands south of I-40 or in the Homer Mountain are be used for this harvesting. Since this draft plan is an attempt to address pertinent management issues throughout the area, let me suggest that here is an additional item that should be considered under proposed action A-3."

Response:

The first comment speaks for itself. The points raised in the second comment will be discussed with County officials when meetings begin in 1988 to develop the memorandum of agreement. The BLM will seek the cooperation of the California State Lands Commission to mitigate adverse impacts on resources on State lands where yucca harvesting is allowed. The County has adopted strict guidelines, and is studying their effectiveness (BLM does not allow yucca harvesting on public lands in the East Mojave).

A-5 through A-7 Mineral Withdrawals

This issue prompted several detailed comments questioning the brief justifications for mineral withdrawals provided by the plan. The final plan describes in greater detail the nature and purpose of the mineral reports which will be prepared for each proposal. The comments and responses below portray the wide range of opinion this matter received.

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64 [Philippe Cohen, Granite Mountains Natural Reserve]
"Unless I'm misreading, it appears that the text and Map C do not agree. For instance, Cima Dome is described as having an 18,260 acre proposed mineral withdrawal, but the map indicates that Cima Dome is already a withdrawn area. Similar confusions are found in the discussion of other areas such as the Cinder Cones, Mid Hills, Kelso Dunes, etc. The letter is especially confusing since the Dunes are listed as withdrawn on the map yet Parker has a mining operation there. Is the operation just outside the boundary?

Table 2-5 lists the Granites as having 86 mining claims. Is information on these claims available for inspection? My curiosity is fueled by an interest in the history of the Granites and potential geologic information not currently available to the Reserve."

Response:

Most areas in the East Mojave have existing multiple use classifications and/or withdrawals. Multiple use classifications are temporary and, in the case of Cima Dome, are placed to segregate the area from agricultural and sometimes mineral entry pending formal land use classifications. Withdrawals define protection to identified resource values by closing an area from specified entries or locations. Under the Scenic Area management plan, the existing acreage under classification and withdrawal will be reviewed in accordance with law and terminated. In some areas, the plan proposes withdrawal of the same acreage under existing law to protect resource values in an area. In other areas, additional acreage over the existing acreage under withdrawal or classification, has been proposed for withdrawal. This accounts for the larger or similar withdrawn acreage locally in the EMNSA.

Portions of the Kelso Dunes are segregated from the operation of the mining laws by Public Order 5224 which was effective in 1972. The mining claims that Parker is operating on were located prior to the date of the withdrawal. Therefore, Mr. Parker's operation may be approved under valid existing rights.

Under the requirements of law and regulation, all mining claimants are required to file copies of their notices of location with the BLM State office. Mining claim case files are open for public review in each state office.

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144 [Russell Kaldenberg, San Bernardino County Planning Department]
"Expand an explanation of the consequences of Mineral Withdrawals from significant amounts of public lands within the Scenic Area.

What are the long term consequences of allowing mineral leasing on the 59,000 acres proposed from segregation from mineral entry under the mining laws?"

Response:

Those areas proposed for withdrawal from the operation of the mining laws have identified resource values that require protection from the appropriative rights granted under the General Mining Law of 1872. Other areas of the EMNSA not proposed for withdrawal, while having resource values, can be protected and managed under multiple use principles. Adequate protection is afforded under the Bureau's surface management regulations to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation to these resource values.

Mineral leasing requires review and approval by the BLM. Unlike location under the mining law which is a self-initiated appropriative right, mineral leasing actions require NEPA compliance with environmental laws prior to lease issuance, and can be denied if impacts from leasing proposals are determined not to be in the public interest.

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218 [Robert Norris, UC Santa Barbara]
"I think it would be a good idea, early in the document, to clarify the difference between mineral entry and mineral leasing. I think I figured it out from context, eventually, but many readers may not be sure as I wasn't sure. Also, the term withdrawal is sometimes confusing. On page 43 it sounds as if the important recreation sites in Granite Pass may be closed to camping. I don't think this is what you mean, although from the point of view of the University Reserve nearby our trespass problem would be lessened if there was no camping there."

Response:

The Locatable Minerals and Leasable Minerals sections on page 121 of the draft plan have been expanded to help clarify the difference between the two mineral disposal categories.

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7 [Scott Anderson]
"Page 93 - All closures under the 1872 mining law should remain closed. No review should be made by the BLM to "justify closure".

Page 92 - Existing rights or "Grandfathered" rights allowing loopholes for mining restrictions in WSA's should be eliminated."

Response:

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 mandates that the Bureau review existing withdrawals to ensure that they are consistent with the uses for which they were dedicated. In some cases, the statutory authority for the classification or withdrawal may have been revoked, or the initial reason for the withdrawal may no longer exist. In these cases the withdrawal may be terminated. If areas require protection through implementation of a withdrawal, the Bureau is required to review each proposed new withdrawal and address the impact on all resource values, including mineral resources, to ensure that such withdrawal is in the public interest. Withdrawals over 5,000 acres must have the concurrence of the Congress.

FLPMA also states that mining operations existing on October 21, 1976, the date of the act, may continue in the same manner and degree. This is defined as "grandfathered rights" and is a right under law that cannot be abrogated by this agency through this plan.

165 [Robert Lamond]
"144,000 acres of newly acquired lands could be used for mining claims which more than compensates for the mere 100,000 acres withdrawn from mining."

Response:

Some of the acquired lands will be withdrawn from mineral entry, including those areas which will be designated wilderness by Congress. Other parcels are in areas of low mineral potential, and will likely receive little impact from mining.

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213 [William Neill, Desert Protective Council]
"On the extraction of volcanic cinders, we endorse the closure to mining of the cinder cones area. Cinder deposits are not of strategic or technological importance, and are not rare: larger deposits that are less scenic (due to forest cover) and more accessible to rail transport are currently being mined several miles east of Flagstaff, Arizona. The draft plan is not clear on the future of the two existing cinder mines; if these are allowed to continue, at what time will mining cease? The cinder cone area is an important scenic resource of the East Mojave, and continued mining at the two existing mines should be ended, if possible, so that the spirit of the "National Scenic Area" designation is not violated."

Response:

The operations within the cinder cone area, because they are existing prior to any proposed withdrawal, could exercise valid rights to continue. Any withdrawal would close the area to further mining claim locations. The Bureau would maintain control on any new surface disturbing activities from existing operations to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation to the Scenic Area.

The extraction of cinders under regulations for material sales (i.e., sand, gravel, cinders) for other than local agency use would be eliminated by action (M-1) added to the Final Plan. Existing operations would be grandfathered.

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8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"A-5 and A-7 We oppose the proposed withdrawal changes: they do not protect the scenic, wildlife and cultural resources. A-7 should be amended to "Recommend that the entire East Mojave National Scenic Area be withdrawn from mineral entry." Once that is accomplished, one could eliminate duplicate withdrawals. At the very least, Soda Dry Lake all of the ACEC's, the entire Kelso Dunes, Providence Mountains and other recommended wilderness areas, those slated for interpretive and recreational use or containing critical habitat for Bighorn Sheep and Desert Tortoises, and all areas with known cultural resources should be withdrawn. The table on page 49 reveals the pitiful withdrawals -- less than 7% of the National Scenic Area.

Whose 1984 recommendations are being cited on page 42 as favoring elimination of these withdrawals? Elimination of Public Water Reserve Withdrawals are not appropriate. Allotment Management Plans indicate that many lessees have acquired water rights at nearly all springs and seeps and developments. BLM should be aggressively protecting public water rights not just by mineral withdrawals but by identifying public need and use of these waters for recreation in the National Scenic Area."

303 [Petra Uhrig]
"We strongly urge the Bureau to provide for the maximum preservation of the area's natural scenic qualities in its final plan. We believe mining interests should be entirely excluded from the area and that use of all of the area should be held for extremely limited uses, such as low-impact hiking and backpacking, and/or that you consider a "human exclusion zone" wherein humans would be kept out of the area for all but research purposes for a number of years.

We commend your plan to withdraw approximately 100,000 acres of public land from mining laws and to not allow any new mining claims. However, we urge you to phase-out the existing mining areas, and we hope that some or all of the 120,000 acres now classified for "moderate" use, and planned for "limited" use, would be reclassified as mentioned in the preceding paragraph."

131 [Elden Hughes, Sierra Club-Angeles Chapter]
"We approved of the proposed withdrawals. There should be more. At one point the Plan describes the 70 square miles of Cima Dome Joshua tree forest protected by an 18,000 acre mineral withdrawal. 70 square miles is 44,800 acres.

Although it is now BLM policy not to lease or renew (oil and gas) leases in WSA's, these pristine areas are in great potential danger from existing leases. Only half of the WSA's have been recommended by BLM for Wilderness designation. The other half is in real danger.

The Cinder Cones Natural National Landmark should be granted the utmost protection and mining should stop there. It does not charm us to see the inside of a cinder cone when we have to lose the cinder cone in the process.

We believe there should be mineral withdrawals from all ACEC's. Our preferred alternative is allowing no new claims. This of course is in conflict with keeping "as much of the East Mojave available to mineral exploration and development as possible". Certainly there should be some sort of prioritizing--we don't need gravel, sand, and cinder pits in a Scenic Area.

Several parts of the Plan acknowledge the conflict between mining and scenic protection. We recommend scenic protection."

Response:

The plan recognizes those areas requiring protection of resource values from the right of purchase and operation under the mining law by proposing mineral entry withdrawals. The plan also recognizes that a balance between resource values can be achieved under the principle of multiple use management. The plan recognizes that this balanced approach can be achieved through

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implementation of regulations mitigating surface disturbing activities from mining operations and monitoring those operations to ensure compliance with pertinent laws, regulations, and orders.

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"A-5 to A-7 These mining withdrawals are much needed. My major complaint is simply that they do not go far enough. More areas should be withdrawn from the mining laws.

Sierra Club - Mojave Group has earlier requested additional withdrawals in the Cima Dome area. While the proposed withdrawal of Wildcat Butte, with zero mining claims, is an important action that will retain intact a beautiful vista, it is only part of the additional withdrawals needed in this area.

The overall rationale is that Cima Dome is a gently sloping area. A hiker traversing its rounded contours is always enfolded by the surrounding Joshua Forest. The natural human desire is to seek a height from which to survey and stand above the surrounding vegetation. On the Dome itself there are three natural buttes that offer such an opportunity. They are Siliconia Butte to the west, Wildcat Butte to the south, and the line of rocky outcroppings called Teutonia Peak to the northeast. Each butte offers different aesthetic appeals, and each is nicely spaced for visitors who camp upon the Dome. They make delightful day hikes.

One of these heights, Teutonia Peak, is already withdrawn from mineral entry.

Siliconia Butte, to the west is 2/3 withdrawn from mineral entry. Unfortunately, the Cima Dome Outstanding Natural Area Boundary on the west simply follows section lines, and the western 1/3 of this butte is excluded from protection. This simple mistake should now be rectified.

I propose that the southeast 1/8 of Section 19, and the northeast 1/8 of Section 30 (see Map) be withdrawn from mineral entry to protect the full extent of Siliconia Butte. This action would result in withdrawing another 160 acres from mineral entry. The recent state surveys by the California Division of Mines and Geology found no industrial minerals or metals on Siliconia Butte.

Wildcat Butte, to the south, is just outside the current mineral withdrawal. This butte is easily accessible to day hikers both from the Dome top and from the power line road which forms the southern boundary of WSA 238B. Is a lung-expanding, but nontechnical scramble to the top, and the visitor is greeted there by a view that is simply unique on this planet. To stand at the flat summit and survey the Dome is to feel the vast curvature of the Earth. It is a view that is essential to the scenic appreciation of Cima Dome.

BLM has proposed withdrawing this butte from mineral entry, and the agency is to be commended for this appropriate action. However, no specific listings of section lines, new boundaries, etc. are given in the draft plan.

I propose that at least the northeast 1/4 of Section 4 and the northwest 1/4 of Section 3 (see Map) be withdrawn from Mineral Entry. This would protect the Butte. It would add another 320 acres to the Outstanding Natural Area. The recent state survey found no industrial minerals or metals on Wildcat Butte.

To the north of the current Outstanding Natural Area, inside WSA 237, are three rocky outcroppings, which I call the Tres Montes. They contain quite pretty examples of Joshua Tree-creosote forest, and the barrel cacti amidst the small buttes lend a special finish to these lovely landscapes. In the center of the buttes a large, sandy wash begins which winds its lovely way many miles to the north.

In the midst of these hills is a State Lands Section (Section 36), which is proposed for an exchange. We heartily applaud such an exchange. When such an exchange takes place this Section 36 should be withdrawn from mineral entry. For now, though, we propose that the following boundaries be drawn around these three mounts and the whole be withdrawn from mineral entry.

The northeast 1/4 of Section 2; the southeast 1/4 of Section 35, the eastern 1/2 of Section 26; the whole of Section 25 - except for the northeast 1/4; the southwest 1/4 of Section 30; the western 1/2 of Section 31; the northwest 1/4 of Section 1."

46 [Russell Butcher-NP&CA]
"We strongly support the proposal to withdraw some 100,000 acres from mineral entry--to enhance the protective management of valuable cultural, natural, scenic, and recreational values. All of the specific proposals, as listed and described on pages 42-49, appear to be of great merit. We urge, however, that the existing 160-acre withdrawal at Hole-in-the-Wall should be substantially expanded to offer far greater protection to this major scenic/geologic attraction of the East Mojave NSA and to the proposed major Visitor Center and expanded campground. In fact, after studying the map closely and recalling visits to that part of the EMNSA, we wonder why this Hole-in-the-Wall withdrawal shouldn't be enlarged to encompass Wildhorse Canyon and the Mid Hills area in a single mineral withdrawal unit."

Response:

The existing/proposed withdrawal for Cima Dome covers Teutonia Peak, Wildcat Butte, and a central portion of the Joshua Tree woodland. Assuming a "worst-case" scenario of mineral development, the proposed acreage withdrawn is nevertheless large enough to protect an integral part of the Dome's ecosystem. However, mineral studies (Desert Plan data and recent state assessments) indicate low to moderate economic potential, making such "worst case" impacts unlikely. In the Hole-in-the-Wall vicinity, the same factors apply. Retention of the 160 acre withdrawal would protect most of the area within the viewshed of the existing camping and day-use area.

When the mineral report for each proposed withdrawal is prepared, BLM will consider known mineralization and other resource values in detail before submitting the proposal to the Secretary for approval. The additional acreage referred to in the comment will be examined to determine if the resource values are sufficient to justify withdrawal. The final acreage proposed may be somewhat greater or smaller after the detailed review is completed.

82 [Marion Ely III]
"Only a few of these withdrawals are defensible, and those being lands contiguous to the developed campgrounds. Such withdrawals are not essential to ensure long-term preservation of unique geologic, scenic, floral, faunal, or cultural resources are found, or where critical water resources occur, to repeat the text.

As the report mentions, mining is one aspect of land use that has contributed to the special character of the scenic area; all scenic vistas are not restricted to natural landscapes alone. One of the sights which draw people into contact with the lands is the curiosity that is triggered by seeing what appears to be a site of mining operations. The examples are too numerous to list. Curiosity is one aspect of human character that underlies their interest in the East Mojave, not just the viewshed.

As has been noted by the USGS, mineral deposits on this planet occupy less than one-half of one percent of the land mass. This figure may be somewhat higher in the East Mojave due to its special geologic environment. None the less, the figure is very small. With the figures given in the plan, the maximum amount of lands presently under claim probably amount to about 10%. The actual surface disturbance potential is probably much smaller based on actual operations vs lands claimed. The potential is probably around 1.5-2%.

The point being that large areas are not threatening these natural resources mentioned. Aside from some scenic compromise, floral, faunal and cultural resources are the beneficiaries of such activity. Many of these special resources would not even be known if it were not for the studies accomplished to prepare for mitigation associated with proposed mining operations. In just this year nearly $100,000 has been expended for such studies and impact mitigation for just one project. Significant discoveries were made that would have been unknown and subject to unauthorized disturbance had not the mining company on their own initiative, implemented such studies. This situation is being repeated in varying degrees year after year in the East Mojave. In one portion of this region ten years ago there was only one mine. There are presently three, and a fourth is being proposed that contains a world-class deposits that were previously unknown."

181 [William Matlock, Gold Fields Mining Corporation]
"Gold Fields' position is that this area is extremely rich in large gold and rare earth deposits. The recent discovery of the three huge gold deposits shows that the geology and exploration potential of the region is only beginning to be understood. It would be extremely premature to close any of the land to mineral entry and/or to classify it so as to make exploration difficult or impractical. Gold Fields and other major mining companies have an established track record of environmentally responsible exploration in the Mojave Desert in cooperation with the BLM."

274 [Robert Simpson, Pleuss-Stauffer]
"The justification for withdrawing the Caruthers Canyon and Keystone Chaparral concerning an alleged number of rare and sensitive plants, including white fir and unusual plant assemblies important wildlife habitat for deer and upland game etc. is not supported by hard facts.

I believe that recommendation for the withdrawal of this some 3,720 acres should be reconsidered with a dynamic effort to formulate a development plan that would accommodate both mining and the environmental needs. The basic and specific data that allegedly support the justification for this withdrawal should be available to the general public prior to final decision."

1 [Hans Achermann, Pleuss-Stauffer]
"In the recent East Mojave National Scenic Area Draft Management Plan, BLM is proposing mineral withdrawals in the Caruthers Canyon and Keystone Canyon areas of the New York Mountains. It is our belief that these areas should not be withdrawn from mineral entry, and we herewith oppose any such action. Supporting data follows:

Several proven mineral deposits and past producing mines are in the areas proposed for withdrawal, and include metallic mineral production, and the largest proven high quality limestone deposits in the southwestern United States. The large proven limestone resource has been zoned MRZ-2 (proven mineral resource) by the California Division of Mines (Greenwood 1985, Joseph 1985).

The BLM Management Plan indicates only moderate potential for limestone in the area, cites only one reference, and admits no mineral survey has been undertaken in the areas proposed for mineral withdrawal.

The BLM Management Plan has proposed the Caruthers Canyon and Keystone Canyon areas for mineral withdrawal because of the presence of so-called sensitive plants and scenic values.

However, the BLM plan, as well as up to date botanical information proves that the criteria for which withdrawal is proposed, are invalid.

No government agency lists any rare and endangered species within the Caruthers Canyon - Keystone Canyon proposed withdrawals.

The BLM New York Mountain Resource Management Plan (April 1986) states, "...the New York Mountains like the other high ranges of the Inyo Region, contains many species from the Great Basin and Southwestern Deserts.....". The plant assemblages are therefore relatively common over a large geographic region.

The "sensitive" White Fir "forest" in the upper Caruthers Canyon Area, covers only 2 acres, consists of only 30 trees, and occurs in a small ravine in granitic rocks near the Range Crest, (Henrickson and Prigge 1975), and is not in proximity to the extensive limestone deposits.

Recent work on the so called endemic (limestone) species proves the plants are not sensitive (Krantz 1970, White Knob EIR 1986). These recent studies as well as the BLM data indicate a minimum known habitat of 50,000 acres in the San Bernardino Mt., Clark Mt., New York Mt. and Mescal Range combined, and may be as much as 100,000 acres.

This recent work demonstrates that these plants are not rare, not sensitive, not endangered, not of restricted habitat, and not limestone endemics.

The proposed Caruthers Canyon mineral withdrawal extends nearly 1 mile beyond the Caruthers Canyon view shed and incorporates a large area of rather ordinary desert terrain with no outstanding scenic value, but which does contain large limestone resources.

We therefore, strongly oppose any such withdrawal from mineral entry."

22 [Mindy & Dennis Belli]
"The existing mineral withdrawals in the EMNSA were originally recommended for revocation by BLM in 1983-84. It was determined at that time, and nothing has changed since, that the current environmental laws and regulations were sufficient to insure against any significant environmental damage by mineral exploration activities. In the next 10 years that this plan is intended to cover, environmental law and regulation is expected to become more stringent, not less, thereby imposing more regulations on mineral exploration and development activity, not less, and making the need for 'protective' withdrawals even less, not more. Any additional withdrawals are likewise unnecessary.

The areas withdrawn or proposed for withdrawal include known silver deposits on Cima Dome, known highgrade limestone deposits near Caruthers Canyon, and areas of high mineral potential in the Providence Mountains."

Response:

Multiple use management means that the public lands are managed for a variety of uses, some of which compete directly with, or are obviously incompatible with, other uses. In some cases, the value of one or more uses may outweigh competing uses to the point where the area must be managed for certain uses to the exclusion of all others. Such is the case with the proposed Caruthers Canyon - Keystone Canyon mineral withdrawal. While it is true that no rare or endangered species are known to occur within the proposed withdrawal and that the limestone endemics are more widespread than originally thought, the fact is that they are restricted to limestone substrates and as such are highly sensitive to any impacts resulting from mining. The fact that the white fir grove is only two acres in size and consists of only 30 trees is precisely what makes it so important to preserve their habitat intact.

The New York Mountain Management Plan actually reads, "Thus the New York Mountains, like the other high ranges of the Inyo region, possess relatively rich flora, containing many species from the Great Basin and Southwestern deserts not otherwise reported for California" (emphasis added). It is this diversity and limited distribution which makes the enriched oak woodland worth protecting.

The eastward extension of the proposed withdrawal, while technically extending beyond the present viewshed, was proposed precisely for that reason - to preserve the existing viewshed and prevent the top 150 feet of the east ridge of Caruthers Canyon from being removed by mining.

As with all proposed withdrawals, a comprehensive mineral report will be prepared and justification provided prior to submitting the proposals to Washington for approval. Any final decision will be based on whether the proposal is in the public interest.

Unauthorized Use

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"The plan makes a case for listing a proposed action on Unauthorized Use but does not do so. We suggest the following: Begin systematic review of case materials to eliminate all occupancy and grazing trespass within the next 5 years, and cite and prosecute all cases of unauthorized use."

213 [William Neill, Desert Protective Council, Inc.]
"You mention the computerization of cases of theft of native plants will be provided. This is an excellent plan provided enough personnel is allocated to police this activity."

Response:

The Bureau is currently identifying and documenting unauthorized uses on the public lands. Those unauthorized occupancies occurring in the East Mojave have been identified as being high priority for resolution and funds have been appropriated to dispose of several unoccupied sites during Fiscal Year 1988.

Hazardous and Nonhazardous Waste

184 [Bernie/Carol Mauldin, California Federation of Mining Societies]
"Because of the expense of loading and hauling [the Goffs dump's] vast quantity of trash off of the Scenic Area and unavailability of other places to dump it, suggest burial at the site with adequate landscaping over the surface as an alternate means of disposal.

Will volunteer Rock Clubs to help. Suggest Class 2 or 3 Visual Objective."

Response:

Comment noted. An additional planned action under Visual Resource Management has been added to address the issue of old dump sites and debris. Volunteer assistance will be welcome.

B. Access

General Comments

135 [Lynn Jacobs]
"Off-road vehicle use has been extremely destructive to the natural environment of the East Mojave National Scenic Area. The Management Plan should ban ORV's completely from the area. Vehicular traffic should be restricted to a few designated traffic corridors. All other roads should be closed and allowed to return to a natural state. Due to the fragility of the East Mojave, the use of horses should be disallowed."

77 [David Dreschel]
"The use of "off-road vehicles" should be restricted to existing roads and the closure of certain roads may be very desirable, where large sections of wilderness straddles a thin corridor. ORV's destroy the fragile ecosystem of the desert and this use should be greatly restricted or eliminated."

113 [Keith Harris]
"I have personally witnessed the mindless destruction of desert terrain, habitat, and archaeological treasures by ORV users. The dust clouds that rise up from these juvenile activities is indicative of the damage happening below. ORV use must be strictly regulated, and such activities perhaps confined to a few "sacrifice areas ...".

244 [Terry Radimaker]
"ORV activities should be cut back from the [existing] 3,000 miles [of roads and trails]. This area would hardly be a scenic area if all you could see is dust in the air."

Response:

The Desert Plan in 1980 identified areas where vehicle use would be eliminated, limited to existing or approved routes, or open to free play. The East Mojave was designated for limited vehicle use, and these areas were closed to vehicles. This policy has actually been in effect for the East Mojave since the early 1970's when the "Interim Critical Management Policy for Vehicle Use in the California Desert" was adopted.

The issue of dust was briefly mentioned by several commenters. The Scenic Area Plan recognizes that some roads may need to be treated chemically to reduce dust, particularly as use levels increase (see rationale for Action B-7 in the Final Plan).

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264 [Patricia Schifferle, Wilderness Society]
"There are no provisions for handicapped and disabled access and use in the plan."

Response:

Provisions for handicapped access have been added to the Final Plan. BLM consulted with groups representing handicapped interests, and will continue to do so as elements of the plan are implemented. Particular attention will be given to campgrounds, picnic areas, and short interpreted trails to provide for wheelchair access.

175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"MRAN questions the need to close so many roads. The need for alternative paths to locations is important to encourage dispersed recreation ... The concept of a loop through a scenic area of natural or cultural interest reduces impact while providing recreational opportunity. The need for an interconnecting network of routes and trails takes merit in reduced impacts to critical resources.

Alternate dirt routes, adjacent to paved roads and interconnecting areas served by the paved roads should be developed. Adjacent does not mean within the viewshed of the paved routes, these routes should have their own viewshed. The goal should be to allow a "desert experience" opportunity to On-Route users as well as the On-Highway users. This is a scenic area and an appropriate level of access for all users should be a goal. [For example,] the only ways into Kelso are on paved roads or Union Pacific right-of-way. There should be access to sites such as these for all vehicles ... Kelso should be included in a network of approved dirt routes. There should be access north to the Mojave trail, or other east-west running dirt routes, and east immediately adjacent to but on the south side of the railroad to Nipton. Nipton is correct, a dirt route immediately adjacent to the Union Pacific would provide an excellent interpretive trail from Nipton to Kelso.

Protection of cultural resources can be accomplished without the closure of existing routes. MRAN agrees that a route that deadends at a site has the potential for negative impacts. Routes that travel past sites should be maintained and the site fenced or signed to protect the resources. Routes that terminate at critical resource sites could be terminated an eighth mile away. The distance is sufficient to discourage the mischievous while short enough to allow access to responsible users ... MRAN is speaking in generalities and not about particular sites. Those sites where major surface collection can still be done should immediately be surveyed. Temporary limitations on the use of the route to such sites would be in order."

249 [Linda Redman]
"Also I believe that roads which vandals use to steal and deface such valuables as petroglyphs and pictographs should be blocked."

Response:

The number of routes closed or proposed for closure in the East Mojave is relatively minor in relation to the number of routes which will remain open, particularly since alternate access routes are available in the areas where closures are recommended.

The concept of a series of interconnecting, unmaintained routes suitable for use by unlicensed vehicles [motorcycles, ATVs, dune buggies are examples] is addressed by the State Off-Highway Vehicle Commission's proposed Statewide Motorized Trail System. This system is discussed on page 70 of the Draft Plan under "Interpretive Vehicle Trails." BLM will continue to work with users in the California Desert to develop a usable network; in the East Mojave, the emphasis will be on interpreted trails so as to encourage use in keeping with access and recreation objectives.

BLM policy for cultural sites is to close routes when there is a clear and present danger of vandalism, the route directly impacts a site or sites, or when use is leading to identified secondary impacts. The routes proposed for closure meet one or more of these guidelines. BLM concurs that closure of "dead-end" routes 1/8 mile from a site is often adequate for protection of the site. It should also be noted that vehicle use near cultural sites often can be permitted with minimal chance of harm to cultural resources.

19 [Donald Beck]
"If the BLM wants to do something for the public, open the Kelso Dunes and let all the off-road vehicles and people enjoy them. If the BLM wants to do something for the desert, leave it alone."

326 [Lee Ziegler]
"I can understand your reluctance, based on lack of desire to respond with efforts and resources, to further develop other "off-road play areas." However, if the BLM did in fact assist, rather than resist, in building additional off-road play areas, then these would get the burden of use by your estimated 200,000 visitors per year. If most of these visitors are encouraged to use these play areas, then the few of us remaining could use the rest of the area without complete restrictions on off-road use without damaging this area's "distinctive Old West appeal."

172 [Phillip & Marilyn Lindberg]
"The area we would like to see left open to off-road riding would include what is currently the Rasor Open Area and also a small portion of the East Mojave National Scenic Area between Rasor Ranch and Crucero, east to the end of the wash between the Union Pacific Railroad and Soda Lake."

215 [Tom Newsome]
"The portion of the Scenic Area that is adjacent to the Rasor Off-Highway Vehicle Area ... is a continuation of, and should be made part of, the Rasor Open Area due to its location, terrain, and usage."

Response:

Decisions on opening/closing areas to vehicle use were made on a desert-wide basis. The Scenic Area was set aside by BLM for protective management in keeping with identified value of its resources. The extensive network of routes provide an outstanding opportunity for vehicle use with minimal harm to the environment. Open areas near the East Mojave, such as Rasor, Johnson Valley, and Dumont Dunes Off-Highway Vehicle Areas, offer adequate opportunities for free play.

42 [Ken & Ellen Bunting]

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"The only use that allows enjoyment of the desert, yet preserves it through minimal damage is two-wheel motorcycle riding. We feel that every other activity except hiking should be prohibited."

135 [Lynn Jacobs]
"Human use of the area should be limited to that which can be done on foot, in an environmentally responsible manner, except for designated vehicular corridors. In many cases, closed roads would naturally turn into foot trails. Certain areas which are now developed would lend themselves well to becoming camping areas. Impact from all trails and camping areas should be monitored, and particularly sensitive areas should be closed to extensive hiking and camping use."

Response:

BLM has a responsibility (and mandate) to provide access opportunities for a wide range of users. Motorcycle riders' and hikers' needs are adequately addressed by the Final Plan, while impacts from four-wheeled vehicle use is addressed by a number of actions designed to improve enforcement and public education.

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8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"The "road" closures are misnamed. Some of them are not roads but only routes. Where possible closures should be effected by disguising the route with berming, plantings, and scarification rather than just signing ... To repeat, the Secretarial Order [designating the East Mojave National Scenic Area] calls for protection, not "balance" with increasing demand for motorized recreational use. The objectives should be substantially modified to:
* Prohibit all vehicle use off designated routes, and control vehicle use in campgrounds.
* Revise vehicle route designations to avoid washes and protect sensitive resources. Eliminate duplicate routes, and relocate routes where necessary to avoid damage to sensitive resources.
* Redirect motorized recreation use to areas outside the EMNSA, including competitive events.

The emphasis should be on the use of the vehicle as a tool to get to the EMNSA, and its ability to provide access to some locations, not as the answer to all access questions.

* The Historic Preservation Act and the Executive Order concerning use of off-road vehicles both require immediate action to protect resources endangered by vehicular use. Can you explain why, if you have documented damage to cultural resources as a result of vehicular use that you have not already closed the routes in the Providence Mountains, and Soda Lake. Similar statements could be made about the Woods and Hackberry Mountains where we have seen evidence of destruction of cultural artifacts as a result of vehicular access."

Response:

Your "objectives" are actions which BLM has already implemented in the East Mojave region. Admittedly, there is much yet to do in terms of enforcement and signing, but these are actions which will receive a high priority for implementation. In areas where a route will be closed to all vehicle use, BLM will use methods such as revegetation or scarification to restore an area to a naturally appearing state. BLM has the authority to close routes on an emergency basis without public review, and does so when the need arises. Use of the routes proposed for closure by the Scenic Area Plan have been used by vehicles for decades. The "threats" to resources from their continued use are not immediate in nature, allowing the public an opportunity for review of our proposals.

B-1 Limit the use of all-terrain vehicles

Over 90% of all commenters made some reference to action B-1. There were three major points made: any policy for ATVs should also address the use of other unlicensed vehicles, the key to their control is enforcement, and any policy should distinguish between 'play area use' (which should not be allowed in the East Mojave), and legitimate access needs on existing routes. Because of higher noise levels and their use for play by young riders, most commenters felt unlicensed vehicles should be banned outright, and not merely limited.

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323 [James Williams, Specialty Vehicle Institute of America]
"SVIA recommends that the Needles Resource Area staff focus their energies on appropriate planning efforts aimed at providing a complete recreational experience for ATV riders. ATV recreation, while different in many respects from other OHV use, can be managed in much the same way. The majority of enthusiasts are interested in a sightseeing, physical activity, which is destination oriented. The following will outline some basic objectives for developing a manageable ATV recreation plan:

a. Allow for point-to-point type trails with scenic vistas or cultural points of interest.

b. Design loop trails to eliminate the need to return from their destination over the same route.

c. Eliminate multiple-access points to trail systems, and instead use a single trunk-type trail as a link from campground to trail system.

d. Employ adequate signing designating approved routes in a positive tone.

e. Increase ranger presence whenever possible to increase riders' awareness that they're in a special management area and not in an open area.

f. Make readily available simple, easy to read maps showing approved routes and outlining regulations within the East Mojave.

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SVIA recognizes the value of initiating solutions to issues before they become problems. In the case of OHV recreation management, it becomes particularly important. For this reason, we feel that delaying any action regarding ATV use in the East Mojave will only serve to forestall the ultimate objective and allow current use patterns to become entrenched, and therefore, more difficult to change. Motorized and nonmotorized activities can coexist in an area the size of the East Mojave. I would be happy to discuss with you SVIA's land use programs and how they might aid the BLM in its OHV planning objectives."

134 [Thomas Jackson]
"Any time you have an area where human beings congregate, you are going to have violations of laws. ATV use is no exception. As a law enforcement officer, I believe that those who violate the law should be contacted, issued citations and then the courts should deal with them. This is generally referred to as due process in a democratic system. Those that obey the laws should be allowed to continue their recreational pursuits. This is their right in a free society. But, to tell those that have been obeying the law that their activity is being curtailed or, in this case, eliminated because of a few who have no regard for the law or are not properly educated as to the reasons for the regulations deprives those people of due process.

It is my understanding that current laws limit ALL vehicle activity to existing roads and trails. This is very specific; it is also very adequate. The Needles Resource Area is going to hire three new rangers. These, plus myself and occasional patrols by the San Bernardino County Sheriffs Office should allow more frequent ATV/ORV contacts. Before penalizing law abiding citizens with virtual elimination of ATV recreation, lets see if the increased patrol effort, plus public education, cannot correct the problem.

173 [Jim Livermore]
"I cannot agree with nor condone the banning of ATVs within the East Mojave. ATVs have a place in East Mojave as does any other form of recreation. Emphasis should be placed on trail signing and designation of trails as opposed to closure. Closure is not management."

57 [Leon Chauvet, California Department of Parks and Recreation]
"The ATV has become an "entry-level" off-highway vehicle (OHV) and, consequently, "play area use" is often associated with ATVs to a greater degree than it is with other OHVs. I agree with the plan's position that play area use, while appropriate in some OHV recreation areas, is not appropriate in the East Mojave National Scenic Area. Play area type use is an important OHV recreational activity for those people wishing to improve their riding skills; thus, it needs to be, and is, permitted in acceptable locations. It is important to note that ATV technology is changing, and the public is expressing a strong preference for the four-wheeled ATV. The four-wheeled ATV will become an increasingly more popular form of general OHV transportation. The point that I am making is that more and more ATVs are being used as "transportation" and not just as a recreational end in themselves (as is the case with play area use).

Play area use should not be permitted for the other forms of OHVs, not just ATVs, in the East Mojave National Scenic Area. It is understood that the other forms of OHVs are not a significant problem as it relates to play area use, but it is also inappropriate to specifically discriminate on a blanket basis against one vehicle type, when the majority of those users are responsible. ATVs are noted for play area use; thus, it is understandable why they are singled out for more attention.

Some immediate selective restrictions on ATV use in specific locations within the East Mojave Scenic Area are needed, but these restrictions should be structured to minimize the impingement to the responsible ATV users who can enjoy the recreation opportunity in an amenable manner. Rather than a systemic area-wide restriction on ATV use, a case-by-case management prescription should be applied.

The State OHV program will continue to assist the BLM by providing funding to better manage the East Mojave Scenic Area, to see to it that unregulated and irresponsible use does not cause a loss of access and enjoyment of this important area to responsible users.."

83 [Henry Ervin]
"I am heartened by the apparent ban on all-terrain vehicle use in the scenic area without authorization. I hope this means these destructive vehicles will be kept at a minimum level. They are not appropriate in an area such as this which is worthy of consideration for full national park status."

85 [Donald Falk, Desert Survivors]
"The supposed "closure" of the Scenic Area to ATVs is carefully worded so that no actual restrictions beyond a permit system need be imposed, despite the rhetoric of the section explaining the "closure." The State Director has made this clear in public meetings. Either this "closure" should be spelled out specifically enough so that it has some teeth (by naming and limiting any exceptions to the closure, though the need for any is not shown), or the claim that BLM plans to close the Scenic Area to ATVs should be withdrawn."

89 [Mrs Warren Forgey]
"The term "multiple use" obviously has no limitations as far as BLM is concerned. Any organization with any obligation to preserve desert ecology should realize you cannot allow free play of ATVs, motorcycles and dune buggies over fragile arid land that receives only 4 or 5 inches of rainfall annually."

262 [Jerry Schad]
"Non street-legal motor vehicle use: With many thousands of miles of roads and large areas devoted to ORV free play elsewhere in the California Desert, surely there is no need to allow noisy non street-legal vehicles in what your literature calls a "gem" of a scenic area. Once again, the scenic qualities of an area are serious degraded — for the vast majority of its thoughtful visitors — by uses such as this."

190 [Ray Miller]
"Is there an area in which an ATV "park" could be established where users could camp and enjoy their activities without impact on the environment and other people visiting the Scenic Area? If such an area were identified, would the BLM consider a new proposal with regard to ATV use?"

137 [William Jeffrey]
"The ban on ATVs, while certain to be loudly protested by those users, is apparently necessary due to a small number of abusers. My concern is that

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similar rational may be used in the future to eliminate jeeps, etc., thereby preventing access to all but hikers."

324 [H G Wilshire]
"BLM's offer to eliminate ATVs (does this mean they will be prohibited in the Barstow-Vegas race which goes through EMNSA?) is good, but why not eliminate motorcycles and dune buggies too?"

Response:

Many commenters were confused by an error in the draft plan. BLM intent was to allow limited use of ATVs, as described on page 52. Unfortunately, the action was described in Parts 4 and 5 as "eliminate the use of ATVs." Our apologies for this error.

In response to the comments received on this action, BLM has completely rewritten the "motorized access" section of the Scenic Area plan. Our change in policy is also partly in response to a new state law (AB781) approved in September 1987, which requires all ATV riders under the age of 18 to have a safety certificate or be directly under the supervision of an adult when riding on public land. Riders under 14 must be under adult supervision and also have the safety certificate. In addition, all ATV riders must wear a helmet. To obtain the safety certificate, riders will have to successfully complete a course of instruction which will include environmental education.

All-terrain vehicles and other unlicensed vehicles will be allowed on the approved route network. A concentrated effort will be made to increase BLM's education and awareness programs, with special emphasis on contacting users of unlicensed vehicles through signing, pamphlets, and entry point information. The plan recommends a significant increase in ranger staffing for the East Mojave, including some who will reside in the Scenic Area. This increased field presence will allow BLM to personally contact unlicensed vehicle users more consistently than in the past. The plan also recommends that the two maintained campgrounds and a portion of Wildhorse Canyon Road be closed to unlicensed vehicles to eliminate identified user conflicts.

Before adopting this approach, BLM seriously considered a management system whereby all unlicensed vehicle users would have been required to obtain a free permit before the vehicle could be used within the East Mojave. The concept was rejected because of time/cost factors for administration, and the potential difficulty visitors might have in obtaining a permit. The system described in the final plan will accomplish the same thing but with less cost.

The idea of an "ATV park" was not considered for the East Mojave. The Bureau has established several open areas in the California Desert for this kind of use, including the Rasor Off-Highway Vehicle Area near Soda Lake. The East Mojave has been closed to "free play" since the 1970s; such use will not be tolerated in the Scenic Area by any type of motorized vehicle.

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B-2 Allow vehicle use in approved washes only

323 [James Williams, Specialty Vehicle Institute of America]
"An integral part of enjoying long rides in the East Mojave has been the accessibility of various destinations via the dry washes scattered throughout the area. Management proposal B-2 concerns us, because the official route designation process under the current desert plan has not been completed yet. Until such time as all approved routes have been designated, the dry washes must continue to provide necessary access. Therefore, we recommend that the existing policy of allowing vehicles in washes with a prior history of such use remain in effect until the OHV community feels that area-wide access requirements have been adequately addressed through the route designation process."

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"Regarding vehicular access in general, we strongly support the proposal to close ill-defined washes to vehicular access. We urge that a more detailed site analysis is needed to determine what constitutes a drivable wash to avoid disturbance of areas that are densely vegetated, archaeologically sensitive, important habitat for sensitive wildlife species, including the desert tortoise, or simply not wide enough to accommodate vehicular use. This analysis should lead to site-specific decisions that should err, if at all, in favor of the protection of fragile ecosystems, cultural values, and scenic integrity. We urge that certain washes that are or may become particularly popular for visitors on foot should also be analyzed carefully for closure to vehicular access."

128 [Vicki Hoover, Sierra Club-San Francisco Bay Chapter]
"Closure of all (nonapproved) washes to vehicle travel is an excellent plan -- but it is unclear how many washes will be "unapproved," how they will be closed, and how such closure will be enforced."

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"We oppose allowing this extensive vehicle use of washes. The route designations should be further reviewed to eliminate use in washes such as Woods Wash and Aiken Wash where documentation of damage to resources is already available. We know of few washes that are truly required for access. Access needed to areas where the route currently lies in a wash should be realigned where possible out of the wash or limited to a trail. Inadequate funding would only allow two barriers per year."

283 [Glenn Stewart, Desert Tortoise Council]
"We recommend that all washes in desert tortoise habitat be closed to vehicular travel. We also recommend that gates be placed across the privately maintained road along the transmission lines in southern 240 Ivanpah Valley in desert tortoise habitat. The gates should be designed to prevent use, except by authorized parties."

Response:

Eventually, all approved washes will be signed "open." The plan calls for closure of washes in crucial desert tortoise habitat: in these areas, and other areas where no drivable washes are located, appropriate signing will be installed. In many areas, the use of washes has already been controlled by

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range fences and the location of gates. Other steps that can be taken include placement of naturally-appearing barriers. To minimize sign requirements, BLM will consider wording which applies to easily understood areas (example: All washes closed to vehicles next five miles).

BLM has the authority to take immediate action to close routes to vehicles if circumstances warrant. These decisions are then described during an annual update of route designations throughout the California Desert Conservation Area, and may be modified based on review of public comment.

At this stage, no specific number of closed or open washes can be given. A number of washes will be added to our route inventory and given an appropriate designation (open, closed, limited). One of BLM's objectives being to maintain an opportunity for dispersed, generally unstructured recreation in the East Mojave, care will be taken to limit signing to those areas where it is necessary for resource protection. At present, most vehicle use in washes is causing little or no resource damage.

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175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"MRAN feels that washes should remain open unless a demonstrable impact is present. MRAN feels that larger vehicles may impact vegetation in washes where narrow vehicles would not. MRAN would hope that washes, impacted by OHV use, but suitable for motorcycle and ATV use would remain open to these types of use. The size of the vehicles determines the appropriateness of the wash. MRAN feels that adequate protection can be afforded by closing washes with potential problems to the type or types of vehicles likely to cause the problems. MRAN questions that if signs and/or barriers will mark closed washes as the situation requires, won't all such washes soon be signed. The cost of posting all washes seems greater than the cost of just posting those washes that need to be closed. Year by year review is better than no review, but it is not timely. When access is warranted and a potential suitable wash is available then immediate action should be made by the BLM. This action could be reviewed yearly. When an increase in activity adversely impacts vegetation, or otherwise threatens the environment within an open wash, then use of this wash should be restricted. The desert is dynamic and immediate action is often called for. Land management is a dynamic process and BLM personnel are capable of proper decision making. Public review of these decisions is justified."

Response:

The Desert Plan's Vehicle Access Element considers washes as appropriate routes for vehicle use, but acknowledges that some wash systems are not suitable for vehicles because of resource conflicts, including vegetation damage and increased erosion from stream bank disturbance.

The draft plan action to close all washes which are not specifically designated open has been replaced with a proposal to adopt a minimum definition of what constitutes a "drivable" wash; the normal vehicle route designation process would then be used to resolve conflicts with resources found in or along washes that meet this minimum definition. Regarding motorcycle use, selected washes may be closed to 4-wheel drive vehicles, but left open to motorcycles due to their narrow wheel base.

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B-3 Route Designations

General Comments

254 [Elizabeth Ridgely]
"Provide a large-scale map with legible symbols (unlike the enclosed map) showing which washes and routes are proposed to be closed."

283 [Glenn Stewart, Desert Tortoise Council]
"When we first looked at Map D, we were impressed with the limits on access and the apparent efforts to protect desert habitat. However, we soon realized that Map D is very probably a misleading map. We do not think that all the "approved" access routes are shown. When we read pages 51 to 62, we learned that the BLM had approved an access network for vehicle use during the "route designation process" in 1985 and that the approved routes, including some major wash systems, will remain open. We believe that the BLM should show all the roads, trails, and washes that will be open on Map D. Since our organization was not sent information on or asked to comment on the BLM's "route designation process," we have no way of knowing just how much access is available and how it affects the desert tortoise. It doesn't help our evaluation that "more detailed maps are available for inspection" at some BLM offices."

80 [Ed Dunkley, CA4WD]
"According to our South District Land Use Committee, they have generally accepted the plan with exceptions on some road closures where justification is not provided, nor is there any apparent reason for the closure, especially in the washes. There was some difficulty in correlating road closures in the draft plan with those roads actually found in the area. There needs to be some better way of marking these routes for easier identification during field inspection."

Response:

The map scale was chosen to give a general idea of the location of the routes discussed under action B-3. Due to the sensitivity of the resource(s) needing protection by route closure, BLM chose not to include more detailed maps in the final Scenic Area plan.

To show all roads, trails, and washes which are open to vehicle use would be counter-productive. Many receive very light use (a few vehicles per year); to "advertise" them by publishing a detailed map could lead to significant use increases and consequent resource conflicts. BLM's Needles Resource Area sent maps to over 1,500 individuals and groups during our initial review of routes in 1984-85, including the Desert Tortoise Council and other wildlife organizations in California.

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85 [Donald Falk, Desert Survivors]
"A. The proposal to revise route designations according to known use patterns and resource conditions (page 22) appears to be a justification for formally recognizing current damaging and/or authorized vehicle routes simply because there is some history of use.

B. The specific closures proposed should be carried out."

Response:

"Known use patterns" can mean increases in vehicular activity which may require a change in designation from open to limited or closed. Several routes in sensitive areas remain open due to the very limited (and low impact) activity taking place. BLM monitors use levels in sensitive areas so appropriate responses can be taken in a timely manner.

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207 [Bob McDowell]
"Close off those roads and washes which receive little use, or are duplications of other routes where another better, more commonly used route exists to a given location. Many roads also do not connect with other roads and do not lead to any particular location. Also eliminate those roads which severely impact natural or cultural features. The specific road closures stated in the plan seem reasonable, and the one road opening seems reasonable as long as there are no impacts on the natural and cultural features, and as long as parked vehicles at that trailhead do not impact the area. Signing should be clear on all roadways as to the usage allowed on those roads. The overall vehicular access system should be a clearly marked and clearly designated grid of normally used public roadways. The use of washes should be kept to an absolute minimum, if not entirely eliminated. Very often, washes are actually teaming with wildlife, very dependent on thunderstorms to spring to life. These values must be evaluated before any wash is opened for vehicular use."

138 [Bruce Jensen]
"We agree with the management philosophy in this section. However, again we would like documentation to support the statement that "[OHV] use may adversely impact the Scenic Areas's wildlife, cultural resources, scenic quality, and soils." It seems that again the "maybe's" outweigh the facts. Until some strong studies can prove these adverse impacts, don't assume they are adverse.

Your ideas about closing several routes to motorized traffic are well-founded and thoughtful. I would like to have seen more specific details on which routes were to be closed, and I would like to have seen criteria which concerned the health of the local environments and habitats, rather than the usually given reason of amount of use. Is there any other way that the routes of travel are approved regarding washes and unpaved ways? If so, please mention them. If not some more thought should be given to why vehicles are allowed where they are."

160 [Steve Kuehl, CORVA]
"While we wholeheartedly support the protection of the natural wildlife, we cannot support the closure of routes until it is well documented that vehicle travel is a detriment to that species. It seems that your wildlife folks sometimes make statements that are not documented, and routes are closed because of them. Scientific studies and facts should support any decisions to close routes or areas to vehicles. And if these studies show that people disturb the wildlife, close the area to all, not just a few."

Response:

BLM resource specialists have made the determination of "adverse impacts" from vehicle use based on field inspections. In some cases, the impact has already occurred, but in most, the potential for impact is very high due to high use levels and/or high resource sensitivity. The closure of washes in crucial desert tortoise habitat is a good example of a designation based on high resource sensitivity. The level of use is emphasized because it is a major factor in the degree of environmental impact an area receives. However, BLM also looks at the access network as a whole, particularly in areas set aside for "limited" multiple use, to determine which routes may not serve a legitimate need. There has been a great deal of public debate over what constitutes a legitimate need for vehicle access; this wide range of opinion is one reason why BLM emphasizes public review of route designation proposals.

Cima Dome

266 [R.W. Scott]
"The map does not show the homestead over the hill from Cut Spring, nor does it show the 3 roads in to the homestead from the east 2 miles south of Cut Spring. I would suggest the closure of 447 from the homestead to Cut Spring only. The rest of the road should remain open to Wildcat Butte to the southwest. The road is there, very plain, not naturally reclaimed at all. The existence of this road does not detract from the isolated, open and natural feeling of the Joshua Tree Forest. Signing it closed won't make it disappear. It allows excellent access into this open area. Close 448, it is unneeded but leave 447 open from the homestead area."

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"In the Cima Dome area, I am particularly concerned about the designated routes on Cima Dome [Wilderness Study Areas 235A, 237, 237A, 237B, 238A 238B]. I have hiked all these paths and many are simply illegal jeep tracks where violators have taken their vehicles once or twice. Others do not exist. To be specific:

1) [SH 442] The route from Cut Spring to Deer Spring.
2) [SH 449] The track trending southwest from the Deer Spring Area to the power line road that goes to Rainbow Wells.
3) [SH 448] The way going west from south of Deer Spring to White Rock Spring. I can conceive of no legal reason why such an illegal jeep track should be an open route.
4) [SH 447] The way going northeast from Wildcat Butte to Cut Spring.
5) [no route number] There are two short routes on your maps going into and through McGee-Atkins WSA [#237]. These do not exist.
6) [SH 445, 446] The series of tracks going around the Teutonia Mine area have no justification since the mine is now shut down. BLM should dedicate these routes as [hiking] trails.
7) [SH 4315] The "route" trending northwest from Deer Spring to the Water Tank is a wash and cattle trot. There remains no evidence of any human use.
8) [SH 3612] The "way" splitting Shadow Valley WSA [#235A] from Valley View WSA [#237B] in an east-west direction has not been travelled in years."

175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"SH 447 and SH 448 should not be closed. These routes are used for sightseeing

recreation by vehicles such as motorcycles that with proper use leave little traces of activity."

160 [Steve Kuehl, CORVA]
"Cima Dome; SH 447 and SH 448 exist. Why close them? Joshua trees are having no problems now, why will they do better without the routes? SH 447 is scenic and provides access to some wonderful camp sites. SH 443 at Cima Road is locked, why?"

291 [M.F. Swedelius, Desert Protective Council]
"I am glad to read you are proposing closing of SH 447 and 448 for protection of the Joshua Tree forest."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"Cima Dome - SH 447 and 448 - Your statement on page 55 is hogwash! The routes in question are very much there and doing fine. I have pictures if needed. Closing them will not do a thing for or against the Joshua trees!! Due to the cattle traffic on 448 at the White Rock Spring end, the untrained eye might not "see" the route, but it is there. 448's closure might be acceptable, but we can see no reason for any change. The route toward Wildcat Butte (447) is very scenic and provides needed access to nice secluded camping with terrific views. The mining near the butte is old and also fairly current (1984 on claim papers, other claim markers visible in the area). The route continues on past the mine southwest, but we did not have time to follow it out. There is also a route toward the Butte from the mine which we did not follow out. Both of these are not on you maps!!"

Response:

Routes referred to in these comments on the Cima Dome area were reviewed by BLM rangers in November 1987. As a consequence, some changes were made in the route inventory and in route designation recommendations:

SH 442 - Road forms a boundary between two WSAs, used for ranch work and visitor access for hunting and sightseeing, and will remain open.

SH 449 - Route between Deer Spring and a powerline road follows fence which separates two grazing allotments, used by ranchers for maintenance. No identified conflicts.

SH 4410 - This route shows signs of moderate use, although some vegetation is growing between the tire tracks. There are no identified resource conflicts, therefore open designation will be left unchanged.

SH 448 - Final Scenic Area plan recommends closure to prevent damage to vegetation. The route is very faint and grown over, and is not required for any identified use.

SH 447 - Draft Scenic Area plan recommended closure. After field review, BLM recommends the route remain open from Cut Spring to Wildcat Butte, and closed south of the Butte. The portion of the route remaining open provides access to good camping sites, and access for hunting and sightseeing.

(no route number) - The "routes" into WSA 237 were deleted from the route inventory in 1985. There is no evidence of vehicle use in the last several years in this area.

SH 445, 446 - SH 445 leads from Cima Road west to Teutonia Mine. The eastern half is overgrown to such an extent that it was not added to the route inventory, although note of its location was made. The final Scenic Area plan recommends this east half be closed to eliminate any doubt on its use. Closure, necessary to protect vegetation, will also enhance scenic quality. Routes which are in better condition provide access to the old mine site. BLM will defer making any other recommendations for changes in the current "open route" designations (such as for SH 446) until a project plan is prepared for the proposed hiking trail.

SH 4315 and SH 434 - SH 4315 forms the boundary between two WSAs, and is used for range management and by visitors for sightseeing. No resource conflicts have been identified. However, the route continuing west from the water tank (SH 434) is mostly filled in and not readily discernible for half its length, and will be recommended for closure.

SH 3612 - This well-used but sandy route provides access for sightseeing. No identified resource conflicts led to its "open" designation.

Cinder Cones

79 [Anne Duffield, East Mojave Rock Art Recording Project]
"We are nevertheless also concerned about the specific instances in the future when we will need to bring equipment to the site in order to complete our work. We request that EMRARP be permitted open access to Cow Cove for the purpose of completing our research. Concerning the proposed road closure [SH 354], we would like to be given more specific information on the material and method of construction to be used on the proposed barrier, and we request that we be kept informed of the construction date."

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"We have not had an opportunity to examine the proposed cinder cone viewpoint. We will withhold a recommendation on this until we see the cone in question and consider its suitability after the site is examined. We support the closures. The Barstow-Vegas Race corridor should be rerouted outside the Scenic Area and the corridor closed to motorized vehicles."

266 [R.W. Scott]
"Most of the suggestions here seem fine, although I don't understand how a cinder cone can reclaim itself. Close 354 at the small play area down the slope onto the flat, close enough for access, far enough for protection."

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"I cannot tell from your map if the current routes into Cow Cove and the Aiken Wash Petroglyph areas have been closed. They should be. The Cow Cove road should be closed (and passively barricaded with boulders) just past the main petroglyph area. This route serves as appropriate entry to the petroglyphs, but then continues on deeper and deeper into the back country where there is no

justification for its destructive impacts. The Aiken Mine road has a short turnoff just east of the mine that leads into Black Tank wash. This route should be closed where it hits the wash, and vehicles prohibited in the immediate vicinity of the main petroglyph area."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"Cinder cones -- Assuming that the Aiken Wash route is open all the way up and not just the three miles above the Rainy Day Mine as shown on the topo map, we can accept the closures, but we don't see the need or the reasons stated."

175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"MRAN commends limitations such as that placed on SH 401. The acknowledgement of appropriateness for a permitted event once a year while restricting occasional access is an example of progressive thinking. Limits to the amount and season of use are more acceptable than the all or none response of closing."

324 [H.G. Wilshire]
"The suggested road closures are good, although many of them (such as those on the sides of the cinder cones) are impassable anyway. However, this does not go nearly far enough. An effort should be made to restore closed roads ("natural reclamation" will take many decades to centuries). In addition, many roads that should be closed are not mentioned (some are not even on the map -- e.g., the several roads south of the cherry stem, north side of Cinder Cones WSA, one of which crosses the mesa to the east) such as the majority of those on flat areas between the cinder cones, segments of the Old Mojave Road that are in heavily vegetated washes (such as Willow Wash) where they are used for free-for-all vehicular play, and roads such as SH 5036 which is maintained only with significant degradation of resources and which provides access for off-road play."

Response:

Closed roads may still be used under permit for emergencies or for access to private land. Before a barrier or gate is installed closing a portion of SH354, BLM will consult with officials of the East Mojave Rock Art Recording Project concerning their temporary access needs. The route would be closed approximately 1/4 mile from the petroglyphs.

The Barstow to Vegas course between Soda Lake and I-15 will be rerouted outside the East Mojave, effective for 1988 and beyond. SH 401 will be closed to vehicle use and reclamation work completed sometime in 1988.

Black Tank (or Aiken's) Wash was field inspected and found to meet the criteria proposed by Action B-3 in the Final Plan. However, from its intersection with Aiken's Mine Road and continuing south for approximately two miles, vehicle use is conflicting with cultural resource management, therefore the Final Plan recommends this segment of the wash be closed, and a route along the southern edge marked open for through travel.

BLM has considered providing "active" reclamation to hasten the disappearance of old roads on the sides of many of the cinder cones, but has concluded such work may increase visual contrasts. Natural rehabilitation by erosion will continue without interference.

Clark Mountain

264 [Patricia Schifferle, Wilderness Society]
"Additionally, the plan proposes to build a road into Clark Mountain Wilderness Study Area, which is clearly unacceptable."

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"We oppose the opening of a road into Clark Mountain from the north (into a WSA). FLPMA does not allow this action unless the area is no longer a WSA."

266 [R.W. Scott]
"I have a little trouble with the idea of some people, hikers that is, getting their special roads opened but wanting to close so many others. But any open road is a good one. The north side of Clark Mountain is such a mess now, who cares anyway."

160 [Steve Kuehl, CORVA]
"Clark Mountains; great move. SH 2024 should be open. We support this management. We object to closing the original route!"

85 [Donald Falk, Desert Survivors]
"Route SH 2024 should not be opened. The argument that it provides access to a trailhead is specious; the closed route itself serves as a trail. Increasing vehicle use in an area currently "protected" as an Outstanding Natural Area, Wilderness Study Are, and Area of Critical Environmental Concern makes a travesty of these designations.

Opening any new road to the New Colosseum Gorge Mine should be contingent on the thorough reclamation and effective closure of the wash route. It is all too likely that new construction would simply result in two roads through Colosseum Gorge."

225 [Jeffrey Opkepke, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service]
"It is our understanding that the decision has already been made to close the current road through Colosseum Gorge and to revegetate that area. The text should be changed to reflect this decision."

175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"MRAN objects to the closing of the wash west from Old Ivanpah. MRAN and we hope most who view the mining operation at the top of the hill should object to the indiscriminate bulldozing of valuable public land. The new graded road will keep most traffic from the wash. Those who seek the flavor of Old Ivanpah and the east side of the Clark Mountains should be allowed access to this culturally rich wash. Access around the mining operation at the top of the hill and the Old Ivanpah Wash should be included in a network of routes within the scenic area."

Response:

Route SH 2024 has existed for several years, and would require no construction to be opened to vehicle use. FLPMA does allow vehicle use on existing routes in Wilderness Study Areas, so long as wilderness quality is not impaired. There is no evidence that vehicle use on this route would lead to such impairment.

The alternate road to New Colosseum Mine was constructed this past summer (1987), and the route through Colosseum Gorge closed. Ponds have been created for wildlife use, and trees will be planted to enhance wildlife habitat. The Gorge is still open to access on foot. The Final Plan has been revised to reflect these actions.

Devils Playground

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"There should be no cross-country use in the Devil's Playground or any other part of the National Scenic Area. We support the proposed deletion."

266 [R.W. Scott]
"SH 621 - This road does indeed exist. It is partly paved, partly graded. The actual configuration is more accurately shown on the Auto Club map. The portion shown with the arrow on your map leads to a rather nice, wind protected primitive campsite, with good views of the sand dunes to the west. Why close it? It is a private road anyway."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"Devils Playground -- We have members who feel the route SH 621 is there, but partially covered with sand. The power company will at some time have to have access. The route exists in part, lets leave it there!! We wish to be involved in the "development" of the route designations in the playground area when it occurs."

Response:

SH 621 is not the paved road referred to in these comments; it is a "route" which followed the transmission lines up a fairly steep slope. The parallel maintenance road (which is designated open) goes to the south to avoid the steep and sandy terrain. BLM will involve user groups in the route designation process for the Devils Playground.

Fenner Valley

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"In Fenner Valley, alternate means of closing a route should be used rather than signing. All washes must be closed to vehicles."

265 [R.W. Scott]
"Why not sign the areas of tortoise habitat instead of total closure of the washes. I mean interpretive signing. Explain the concerns, try to educate, not close out."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"Fenner Valley -- Before wash closure, lets talk!!!! We probably should meet on the ground to do this. Lets not close and then talk. This causes too much ill will!!!"

160 [Steve Kuehl, CORVA]
"We disagree with the wash closure [in Fenner and Ivanpah Valleys]. We do not see any reason to close this access. There is no documentation of abuses."

Response:

BLM has recognized the need to implement additional measures to protect crucial desert tortoise habitat, which is still relatively intact in the East Mojave. Closure of most washes to OHV use in Fenner Valley, the southern end of Lanfair Valley, and Ivanpah Valley will help significantly in this effort. Major washes such as Watson and Woods Washes will remain open, along with the secondary or routes traversing these regions, providing sufficient access opportunities for mining exploration and recreation use.

Granite Mountains

64 [Philippe Cohen, Granite Mountains Natural Reserve]
"There needs to be a distinction made between roads closed to the public but still accessible for Reserve use. Below are a list of the roads and my concerns.

639 is within the Reserve and eventually will be fenced off. Therefore, this road should be closed to the public but still be available for Reserve users.

785 is not usable west of White Fang. However, the segment from Kelbaker to our gate near White Fang is a major access point for a campground in that area. The road should be closed to the public but accessible for Reserve use. This segment is less than 1/2 mile, and therefore closure would not prevent the public access of the bajada between the fence and Kelbaker. Generally, vehicles driving that road and not affiliated with the Reserve are often looking for ways to broach our fence line.

7810 is the major access to the cabin in Cove Spring. Only the west 1/2 need be closed to the public, but must remain open for access by Reserve users.

MH 7823, 7824, 7825, and 7826. I am unable to locate these roads and the maps at the public hearings didn't adequately show their location. It would be useful if you could mail me a description of their locations. Are they all washes on the east side of the Kelbaker?

In general, the only problems I foresee with road access is in the need to develop a designation system whereby a road is closed to the public but is available to Reserve users. It is unclear to me whether signing or some sort of gate system would be best. Maybe something on the order of what is planned for Soda Lake road AF324 (page 58)? I suspect this is something we'll need to sit down and talk about."

266 [R.W. Scott]
"Most of the closures on both sides of the Granites seems to be a convenience for the U. of C. It appears to be a legitimizing of de-facto closures anyway. R.E. 639, 782, 784, 785, 7810. The maps here are impossible to understand. They show about 25% of the roads actually present."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"Granite Mt. — Would you clarify for us as to who the state is in reference to the five plus sections of land where you are partially closing roads?? College or State Lands Commission? or?? MH776 should, if public access is allowed, remain open an additional 1/4 mile to a camp site/turn around. MH 636 leads to cattle salt licks etc.

It is impossible to tell from your topo map where the north and east routes are in reference to what is actually on the ground! The 7824 group could have been in several places. The routes we traveled were certainly not causing any noticeable damage. There seem to be enough cactus to keep people on the routes. We would need to see some documented evidence before routes are closed on public lands when so many routes nearby are already closed and the additional proposals in the plan would add more closures. The "resources are being damaged by vehicle use" excuse is just that — an excuse. How can we have entry points into a WSA which has no roads?? How about modifying the WSA to exclude roads!!"

160 [Steve Kuehl, CORVA]
"Clarify who owns this land, where the proposed route closures are to be placed. MH 776 should allow to be continued 1/4 mile further to allow for a camp site and a vehicle turn around. The whole 7810 through 7826 route closure proposal is wrong. Examination of these routes do not show that "important resources are being damaged by vehicle use." The natural diversity of the area ie. rocks and cactus would preclude a vehicle from traversing this area except on the existing routes. Access to this area is already very limited. Furthermore, no documentation is offered in the plan to support this statement. Access in WSAs is allowed in the Desert Plan. Why not allow for this use until Congress decides this issue?"

175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"MH 776 and MH 636 might be suitable for some vehicles. If four wheel vehicles invite trespass then perhaps restricting their use is appropriate. MH 776, MH 636, MH 639, MH 782, MH 784, MH 785, and MH 7810 all appear to invite trespass on fenced land. Fences stop motorcycles. Fences should restrict access. The posting of these fences and education of the users would seem more appropriate than closing the roads. MH 7823, MH 7824, MH 7825, and MH 7826 all are described as impacting important resources. The nature of these resources are not stated in the draft. The proper use of a road should have little impact on resources. The improper use of a road should be dealt with through enforcement and education, not road closures. MRAN makes observation on the roads in Granite Mountain with limited knowledge of this area. There may be sound reasons for these closures, but they were not apparent in our review of the draft."

Response:

Routes closed to the general public may still be used for administrative purposes. In these cases, BLM will work with land owners or authorized users to install gates. The route closures recommended in the Granite Mountains Research Natural Area are designed to eliminate identified conflicts with research and education activities which are the primary uses of the area. Much of this land is owned by the University of California. These closures do not eliminate access opportunities to public lands, however, since alternate routes are available. Some routes being closed are causing direct impact to cultural sites and were intentionally not signed or mapped in detail so as not to divulge their locations. No routes are recommended for closure simply because they are located in a Wilderness Study Area.

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"Regarding route closure proposals, we strongly favor and are particularly pleased to note on page 56 of the document that a cluster of routes around the easterly end of the Granite Mountains (MH 776, 636, 639, 782, 784, 785, 7810, 7823, 7824, 7825, and 7826) are proposed for closure to motor vehicles. Incidentally, we're assuming that the Sheep Corral is proposed for closure. This is an extremely sensitive scenic area that merits being open exclusively to foot travel."

Response:

The Sheep Corral is "closed" in the sence that no routes have been identified within the area. BLM will take steps to place boulders or vegetation in locations where unauthorized cross-country travel may occur.

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"We do not understand how the routes in the Granite Mountains can be closed at the same time the area becomes a "designated" camping area. The two policies seem in conflict. Does the establishment of the Reserve preclude use by the public, or not?"

Response:

The Final Plan has been revised to clarify BLM policy on locating "designated camping areas." These areas will be surveyed to identify suitable camping areas in the vicinity of the key attraction, in this case the granite outcrops near Granite Pass. Care will be taken when locating camp sites to avoid any cultural sites or other valuable resources, while still providing a desirable setting for camping use. The route designations are actually complementary with campsite designations as means to resolve use-resource conflicts. The Research Natural Area may be used by the public for uses which are compatible with the research and education activities for which the area was specifically designated: controlled vehicle access, rock hounding, hiking and camping continue, along with grazing.

Kelso Dunes:	(no comments)
Lanfair Valley:	(no comments)
Marl Mountain:	(no comments)

Mescal Range

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"As long as 377 remains unrestricted, OK. If it does not become an interpreted hiking trail soon, it should revert to vehicle use."

252 [Robert Reynolds, San Bernardino County Museum]
"The road closures proposed in the Plan in general seem to be well thought out. However, I did not see Road SH 4411 in the Mescal Range indicated on Map D. Without knowing its specific location, I can make no specific comment. However, many research projects are continuing in the Mescal Range, including Natural History, Cultural Resource Inventory, research in paleontology, and regional and specific geologic mapping by several agencies and universities. Note that road access to Antelope Cave via Antelope Canyon on the west side of the Mescal Range is necessary to continue the cooperative salvage of Antelope Cave underway by the San Bernardino County Museum and the BLM. Road closures on the east side of the Mescal Range could affect access into the Jurassic/Triassic section of the range (and to the trackways site). Access to this area will continue to be of critical interest to geologic and paleontologic research."

Response:

Route SH 4411 was inadvertently left off Map D in the draft plan. BLM has not identified any resource conflicts from vehicle use on route SH 377 (which provides access to the Evening Star Mine from the south), and has made no recommendation to change the route's open designation.

Mid Hills

266 [R.W. Scott]
"MH 216 - 1313: There needs to be some other arrangement made other than closure here. These roads lead to some spectacular viewpoints and very nice isolated camping spots. The closeness of the destination camping at Mid Hills seems to me to be a perfect opportunity for educational, interpretive use of the cultural sites. Maybe a foot trail showing what the sites are. Explain the concerns and the process of preservation, try to explain why it is so important to preserve these sort of places. But don't close the through access. The preservation of the sites should not always be reason to close access to the people."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"Mid Hills — We cannot agree at all!! 1313 should remain open. It is a well used through route with many camp sites in the area. MH 216 leads to one of the best view spots in the area. The routes in and of themselves are not doing any harm to anything that hasn't been "damaged" for years. We would like to suggest "further study" on the ground. Several possibilities include: restricting camping, fencing parts or all the critical sections, no stopping for "X" distance signing, closing short camping spurs, or combination of all.

Alternative management needs to be developed!! Not closure!!

The "Arch site?" and view site could be incorporated into some form of interpretive display. Cultural resources and their needs could be explained, the high desert flora and fauna present could be discussed and the distant places seem from the view site could be interpreted. This could be stop #1 on the Mid Hills to Hole-in-the-Wall Wild Horse Canyon Motorized Interpretive Trail."

160 [Steve Kuehl, CORVA]
"Mid Hills: Routes MH 216 and 1313 should be left open and a good management plan developed to allow for access. Fencing of problem areas and interpretive trails developed. The "damage" has been there for many years. Again manage the area, not close it."

Response:

BLM has reviewed these recommendations in light of these comments, and has concluded that the alternate measures suggested would not resolve the identified conflicts with cultural resources. Data recovery costs would be prohibitively expensive to keep these routes open. However, the Plan calls for additional studies and mitigation efforts for sites such as one found in this area; the route may be reopened later if funding for data recovery becomes available.

New York Mountains/Castle Peaks

266 [R.W. Scott]
"MH 159,1510, 1511 - How can you consider the closure of these roads and leave open that mess in the Granites. Is it possible the same rationale is not applied in both cases? Sign the sites for protection, leave the camping sites. These sites are used by all sorts of people. Boy Scouts to Cowboys."

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"We support the closures in the New York Mountains and Castle Peaks."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"1511 - Could not tell for sure if we found it, but if so several camp sites and several additional routes, all short will be closed. We don't feel closure is necessary. 1510 and 159 also lead to several camp sites and additional short stub routes. The small spring at the end of one of these is possibly providing some needed water in wet years, but not much currently. Cattle water is available nearby. I don't feel the longest extension of what ever route number is as long as depicted on the maps. Many campsites will be closed.

We doubt that serious changes are now occurring to any archaeological site as stated: "vehicle use is causing damage to cultural resource sites". What documented evidence do you have that the driving of a vehicle in the area has or is causing the problem?

With the poorly conceived camping regulations proposed in the plan, closing short routes to camp sites like these in Caruthers Canyon will surely lead to increased route proliferation to "new" campsites. People generally don't want to camp on top of other unknown folks. If BLM predictions of increased numbers of people occur, all the available camp sites will be needed. These closures will cause more problems than they ... would help. There are many other routes in the area that are not on your topo map!

If there is specific site disturbance, then specific site controls are needed and/or alternative management is needed."

175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"The justification for closure of MH 159, MH 1510, MH 1511, MH 216, and MH 1313 [the last two in Mid Hills area] cite damage to cultural resources. MRAN would like to reiterate that access near, but not to, such sites is appropriate. The need for a 1/8 mile walk can separate the good from the bad. Cultural resources deserve the adequate protection while responsible public [users] should not be denied reasonable access. The need for signing of these sites to protect them, the need for interpretive signs and the need for better user education are all alternatives to the closing of roads and the subsequent denial of access to a large portion of recreational users. MRAN urges that such actions in lieu of closure be considered. The specifics of each road and the cultural resources being impacted are not known to MRAN. We only urge consideration and examination of alternatives."

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"We are pleased with the proposed road closures just to the south of the New York Mountains (MH 159, 1510, and 1511); in the Mid Hills area (MH 216 and 1313); and off the Wildhorse Canyon Road (MH 354) to enhance the protection of cultural sites."

Response:

See response to comments for route closures in the Granite Mountains and Mid Hills area.

The Final Plan's camping policy has been revised. In the case of designated camping areas in the New York Mountains, a location will be selected along New York Mountains Road, but within an easy walk of Caruthers Canyon. Back country vehicle camping will still be allowed in the canyon, but only in areas which will not directly impact cultural resource sites. The designated camp area is intended to reduce camping pressure within the canyon.

Piute Range:

175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"If AF325 is that dug-way section within the canyon then the closure is appropriate. There are several in our organization who fondly remember riding that portion in the past. The interest in the Mojave Trail and other uses coupled with an increasing environmental consciousness lead to the disuse of this section by members of our group. The "cattle road" that goes by the top and provides access to an overlook should by all means remain open.

MH 258 provides an alternative exit from the Fort Piute area. This type of route is desirable for dispersed recreation. The bajada that the road traverses is difficult and off-road excursions impractical. There is no need for revegetation as this route does not have serious impact on the area."

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"Why is it necessary to "close" a route which 1) was illegally constructed and 2) according to the IMP reports has been "reclaimed" to the extent possible for more than a year? Does this mean that the reclamation was inadequate and that use is continuing along this route? Why was this section of the Mojave Road made a designated route in the first place? Why do you have impassable routes indicated as open?"

Response:

For the sake of completeness, the list describing specific route designations includes routes which have been closed or recommended for closure since the route inventory was completed in 1985. MH 258 has been closed to vehicle use since 1985 to allow for revegetation. The Final Plan has been revised to indicate the current status of these closures (ie. implemented/not implemented). Routes that are currently impassable are added to the inventory, since vehicle use often can restore the route. This policy was adopted in the Desert Plan due to the frequent damage storms cause to the route network.

Providence Mountains, North

266 [R.W. Scott]
"MH 354 - Why not close the road at the wash crossing around the end of the mesa, not out where the map shows it. You also don't show several roads around the one you are concerned with, both in and out of the washes. MH 484, 488, 4812, 4813. Why not let the state people handle their own problems. They only cooperate with you when they want something anyway."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"MH 354 -- Access to this area has been public for years. We doubt that vehicle use is of itself, doing damage as stated. People may be causing some problem to some site, but it is not obvious on the ground. A good place to stop traffic where there is a good camp site and turn around can be done easily is at the creek crossing past the guzzlers. This also leaves access to the guzzlers which will need service in the future. If specific fencing is needed, do it. Don't just block public access. The road up the wash in front of the two BLM signs is not on the map. I have always used that route rather than the graded one from the road on the topo map.

We don't feel that the State Rec. Area should dictate what happens on the surrounding BLM lands. They are a single use management philosophy, not multiple use."

160 [Steve Kuehl, CORVA]
"MH 354 needs continued public access. The "damage" again is not evidenced by the use of vehicles but by people who visit the area. Access to the guzzler needs to be maintained. A turn around near the creek crossing, should be adequate. Since when does the whims of the State Recreation Area override the

mandate of multiple use of the East Mojave? The State Recreation Area should not set a precedent, telling the BLM how to manage public lands!"

27 [Howard Blair]
"MH 4813 was the first road into the Bonanza King mine and is the oldest road in the scenic area. However, I do support closure."

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"We likewise favor proposed road closures in the vicinity of the Providence Mountains State Recreation Area (MH 484, 488, 4812, and 4813).

Response:

The Final Plan proposes that MH 354 be closed from the creek/wash crossing to its end, as suggested by two of the comments reproduced above. This closure has nothing to do with the State Recreation Area, and was proposed for protection of cultural resources on public lands.

The route closures recommended in support of Providence Mountain State Recreation Area's management program are in keeping with BLM's "good neighbor" policy. The routes in question lead directly into the Recreation Area, while alternate routes which are designated open lead around the Recreation Area boundary fence. No sites requiring visitor access by vehicle will be closed off by this action.

Providence Mountains, South: (no comments)

Soda Lake

107 [Wayne Guerrini]
"Why are you proposing closing Soda Dry Lake? (page 58)"

160 [Steve Kuehl, CORVA]
"We are concerned that the Barstow to Vegas course was not mentioned in the Soda Lake area. Is this just an oversight? We [also] feel that SH 481 should remain open. We do not feel that this route is damaging the lake bed. What constitutes "damage?" AF324 should remain open to the public. There are many documented procedures available to mitigate any adverse impacts that may arise with continued vehicle use."

206 [R.S. MacPherson]
"Soda Lake -- As we have mentioned previously, the north section above Mojave Road of SH 431 on the east side of Soda should remain open. It is not "damaging the lake bed." It is also the main connector to the Baker area. Where is the route "south of SH 541?"

543 and 324 also need further consideration and some on the ground discussion. Cultural sites might need some special attention, but closure should not be the answer!! If the BLM really wants the lake bed problem to lessen, there will have to be some coordination with users on site. I strongly suggest that the Needles RA handle the problem on the first attempt. After common grounds are reached, RA coordination can take place."

160 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"MRAN comments on Soda Lake with apprehension. Our knowledge and understanding of this lake is based on knowledge acquired up until 1974. The subsequent cancellation of the Barstow to Vegas Motorcycle Race and the distance from Las Vegas have restricted our use since this time. The lake when wet is innospitable and vehicles tend to migrate to the 'shores.' This area is where the most significant cultural resources are. While the artifacts remaining are subsurface, the importance of these cultural resources may well preclude most forms of vehicular activity. The limitations may indeed be proper. The distance from Las Vegas and our dated knowledge of the area prevents us from making any recommendations. The closure of roads with [out] sufficient warrant is wrong, these closures and limitations appear warranted."

324 [H.G. Wilshire]
"As usual, BLM becomes entangled in its own words when it gets specific. For example, on page 74 it is stated that "It is the intent of the Plan to eliminate cross-country travel of any kind." To make this claim "consistent," BLM labels part of the cross-country Barstow-Vegas route a "road" (and even gives it a number) that is limited to "permitted use only," that is, for cross-country motorcycle racing! Other cross-country segments of the route aren't even shown on the map. Moreover, this route and two others, including the Old Mojave Road, cross a "Vehicle-Closed Area," showing that the classifications are meaningless."

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"What provisions are being made to protect the historic remnants of the old route across Soda Lake?"

Response:

Soda Lake was closed to vehicle use by the 1980 Desert Plan, with the exception of any specific routes which are designated open.

The original Mojave Road, SH 541, is closed due to frequent wet conditions. Travelers use a more southerly route (AF325) which is marked on Map B of the Final Plan as the Mojave Road. BLM has no plans to protect the remnants of the original route across Soda Lake, other than by closure to vehicle use.

Woods Mountain/Hackberry Mountains

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"Additional washes should be closed to vehicle use. Specifically, Woods Wash should be closed to vehicle use from the broken apart gates at the north end of the petroglyph area to the watering trough at the southern end of the wash. This distance of some 3 miles is studded with treasures, including an important Barrel Cactus area, fossilized oyster beds, and the important petroglyph site. It is special, quite lovely, and still very accessible without vehicles from either end. It is also the heart of the Wilderness Study Area, and on that ground alone, should be closed to vehicle access."

Response:

No resource conflicts were identified from vehicle activity in Woods Wash. Vehicle use occurred long before designation as a Wilderness Study Area, and can continue unless the area is designated wilderness, or is impairing the area's suitability for designation. BLM's monitoring program has uncovered no evidence that vehicle use is causing such impairment.

B-4 Signing

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"Several "prescriptions" for route marking call for signing secondary routes. If I remember the [Needles "ad hoc"] advisory committee comments on the subject, I thought attention was not to be called to these routes by marking or placing very many of them on the maps used by the public. BLM was to have them on master maps and make them available on request to the public."

254 [Elizabeth Ridgely]
"Signs will increase vehicle use and disturbance/damage to the environment where there was none previously."

264 [Patricia Schifferle, Wilderness Society]
"Sensitive washes, still before Congress for wilderness consideration, such as the Woods and Hackberry Mountains, will be exposed to increased vehicle traffic under the plan by BLM signing and posting of vehicle routes. The plan should prohibit all vehicle use off designated routes instead of encouraging such use by signing and authorizing the use of resource sensitive areas such as washes."

Response:

Desert Plan guidelines for vehicle access already prohibit vehicle access off designated routes in "limited" use areas. The signing of selected routes will encourage access where it is least likely to cause conflicts with resources or other users. Selected washes will also be signed to eliminate confusion about where the route goes, thereby reducing impacts to stream banks.

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323 [James Williams, Specialty Vehicle Institute of America]
"BLMs signing plans look excellent (appendix H), and we have found the Carsonite type materials to be extremely durable and resistant to vandalism. We urge an effort on the Bureau's part toward positive signing rather than negative, which can lead to rebellious attitudes and greater vandalism."

Response:

Comment noted. BLM intends to work with user groups to provide positively worded information and signs in support of our motorized access program.

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137 [William Jeffrey]
"Restricting vehicle use to designated routes is fine but please sign all other routes "closed" to eliminate confusion for those with noncurrent or inaccurate maps. It is frustrating to see moderately-faint tire tracks leading off to an interesting area and wondering if the route is legal or not."

254 [Elizabeth Ridgely]
"How would you close a wash? Every time it rains, the barricades will be washed out."

325 [Waite Wynekoop]
"The proposal to increase the use of barricades to close vehicle ways more unambiguously would help bring more closures from the realm of theory into that of fact. Barricades are particularly important in cutting off easy access to vandals of historic and prehistoric archeological sites."

134 [Thomas Jackson]
"Has it ever occurred to anyone on your end that maybe people come to the EMNSA because of its lack of development and signs (no pun intended) of civilization? If people want gross examples of government intrusion with their recreation experience, they would go to Yosemite, Kings Canyon, Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, etc. ... I can only hope that your success with this will be better than your effort at Ft. Piute a few years ago. Hopefully, we will not see any more bright, highly polished chains stretched around any historical sites or any other area for that matter. Please, have whoever is detailed to complete this task read Webster's definition of "unobtrusive"."

Response:

Routes not designated open, or areas where unauthorized off-road travel is likely to occur will be closed by signing and/or barriers, which may simply be large rocks or graded berms. Washes would be closed by signs usually, unless resource concerns warrant the additional expense (and potential maintenance needs) of barriers. The signing program is not intended to identify every existing route in the East Mojave as open or closed, but instead will be emphasized for routes leading to key visitor use areas, or where marking is required to identify a route's location in sandy terrain.

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285 [Rose Strickland, Sierra Club-Toiyabe Chapter]
"Banning ATV's is a good step, but ... the draft Plan depends on extensive signing with no indication whether BLM can AFFORD the signs or alternative actions if the signs don't work. In any event, we suggest that vehicular access be limited only to areas signed open - thus eliminating the incentive for current extensive vandalism of signs restricting vehicular access."

Response:

The Desert Plan's original vehicle access element allowed vehicle use only on approved, signed routes in areas designated for limited multiple use. This policy was changed by a 1982 Desert Plan amendment, which stated that routes not approved for use would be signed, barricaded, or reclaimed. The change was made because of problems in implementing and enforcing the original policy over millions of acres of public land, and the potential for confusion in explaining to the public why, in adjacent "moderate" use areas, all unsigned routes were open and signed routes closed. Vehicle use regulations are adhered to by an overwhelming majority of users in the East Mojave, and will be enforced not only by the signing program, but also ranger patrol and education efforts in cooperation with State agencies and user groups.

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227 [Gary & Linda Overson]
"Since there are Allotments in all of the Scenic Area, and since most of these ranches were here before the BLM, and developed and maintained their own roads for livestock watering and ranching operations, we think that before the BLM places any signs indicating a road is open to the public to use, the rancher should be consulted and have some input as to whether or not they want the public using their roads. Also, ranchers should be given the option to deny access if conflicts arise. More signs on the county roads to watch for livestock would help."

Response:

Most routes are already open to public use - the signing program can be a useful tool to direct visitors away from range waters or other improvements. BLM will attempt to resolve identified conflicts through consultation with residents and user groups.

B-5 through B-7 Non-Motorized Access

133 [Robin Ives]
"Until there is clear evidence that there is a justified need for the development of new trails and facilities for non-motorized access, why build them? We feel that this is an unjustified waste of taxpayers' money, and those funds could be utilized in a much more efficient manner. Should the need arise for these facilities, solicit private and federal funds to cover them. Why throw a party if no one is going to come?

We disagree with the statement that there is a growing demand for non-motorized activities. Nowhere in your plan do you document this growing demand. Only when this demand is currently present, should the East Mojave provide for this demand."

227 [Gary & Linda Overson]
"Before any trails are established, there should be a proven need for such trails. Also, how these trails are to be developed should be addressed. Are existing roads going to be used, cattle trails, etc., or are new trails to be made that disturb more country? Another aspect that bothered us is that the trails will be going by several established stock waters and also through areas where our cattle are grazing. This could seriously affect our ranching operation. It is a definite must that before these trails and campsites are developed that the rancher's whose allotments they go through and are on have to be consulted to avoid serious conflicts in the future. We would also like to see camping allowed only in designated spots and have the 600 foot limit extended to even further away from water sources."

107 [Wayne Guerrini]
"I would like to see areas set aside that are designated as hiking areas/paths only, so that those people who feel they need this can have a place to perform those activities, free from any vehicles. (Although I am uncertain how they are going to get into these areas without a vehicle.)"

38 [F.E. & Vivian Brant]
"The proposed hike, bike, or horses' trail, sounds like a super romantic idea, but by the time tour groups get through with it we would have the same erosion problems that we have with automotive dirt roads."

28 [Rob & Kate Blair]
"We do not support the proposed trail between Granite Mtns. and the New Yorks for the following reasons: 1) Potentially hazardous long distances between waters, rapid dehydration, and intense heat could be fatal to the inexperienced desert visitor. 2) There is no way to control litter along the trail because of the strong winds."

65 [Michael Colavito]
"Thank you for the copy of the draft and the opportunity to comment. My only comment is that I feel that the proposed Granite Mtns. to New York Mtns. trail should be built now in it's entirety as "demonstrated demand" is inevitable as is inflation."

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"We favor the proposal to develop a network of trails for hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking. A trail corridor extending some 60 miles from the Granite Mountains, through the Providences and New Yorks to Castle Peak would offer a grand opportunity to experience the EMNSA's central backbone of mountains and the vast desert panoramas.

We favor the proposal for other trails, as from Cima Dome to Clark Mountain and in the Woods/Hackberry Mountains. Trail guides, as suggested on page 60, are also an excellent way in which to enhance the visitor's experience and appreciation."

Response:

BLM agrees that development of a major non-motorized trail system without user interest or support is unwarranted. The Scenic Area Plan was revised to put a greater emphasis on day hiking opportunities, but still includes provisions for extended hikes. Initial efforts on four trails will be closely monitored; in addition, BLM's Desert District will be contracting for a visitor-use survey which will give some indication of user support for various recreation developments.

During the preparation of trail-specific project plans, BLM will coordinate with ranchers, miners, or others whose interest may be affected by a proposed plan. Trail locations which minimize conflicts with waters, cultural sites, or mining activity will be sought. Efforts will also be undertaken to minimize erosion or disturbance to surrounding terrain by use of water bars.

Some "non-motorized" trails will certainly use vehicle routes, at least in part, particularly for equestrian or mountain bike use. It is doubtful that closure to vehicle use would be recommended in many cases, since high-use vehicle routes would not be considered suitable for other uses.

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20 [Tom Beecroft]
"As a hiker, both on trails and cross-country, I am tired, tired, tired of being run off the "road" by the inconsiderates. Also I have found that since they don't have to pack things in, they haul in useless unused materials to be discarded along the routes.

3,000 miles for ORV use is intolerable and unbelievable."

258 [Mary Lou Rosczyk]
"I am also pleased with the proposed non-motorized trail from the Granite to the New York Mountains (page 59). However, I feel that the use of mountain bikes on this trail and any other trails in the East Mojave be carefully evaluated to see of any restrictions are necessary. Recent studies indicate that mountain bikes may not be as environmentally benign as once thought."

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"Regarding the use of mountain bikes, we urge that they are not an appropriate means of transportation within wilderness."

264 [Patricia Schifferle, Wilderness Society]
"The development of mountain bike trails in wilderness study areas as proposed would introduce new incompatible and potentially resource damaging uses prior to Congressional determination of wilderness designations. The plan appears to promote incompatible recreational uses on the same trails, such as equestrian trails and mountain bike trails and hiking trails, without adequate consideration of how to minimize the future conflict and enforcement problems."

Response:

Current BLM policy does not allow the use of mountain bicycles in designated wilderness areas. This policy will certainly have an effect on their use in the East Mojave, and will be considered when decisions are made regarding proper use of each trail segment. BLM personnel are aware of the conflicts occurring in National Park/Forest lands between various non-motorized users, and will take steps to reduce these conflicts in the Scenic Area. Some trails may be designed only for hiking, or for all non-motorized users; others may emphasize equestrian use in guides the BLM will provide, but still allow other types of non-motorized (or motorized) use.

134 [Thomas Jackson]
"Does the obscure statement "increased demands" justify a budget of $357,000 for the next five years? The way I see it, two conditions exist: 1) A hiker can park his vehicle anywhere he pleases (except near a water hole) and walk (hike) almost anywhere his curiosity, stamina, imagination, and water supply will take him. 2) By your estimation (page 51), there are over 3,000 miles of roads and trails in the EMNSA. If that isn't enough for the multitudes(?) of mountain bike riders, then they can adapt a system to derive revenue from their own group and construct their own trails. This could be similar to the green sticker fund for ORV's.

Cost to the taxpayer for #1 and #2 combined: $0.00."

122

254 [Elizabeth Ridgely]
"Hiking trails and equestrian trails do not enhance an area from my perspective, I'd rather ride or walk in an area which is undisturbed."

Response:

Any such trail construction will be designed to fit in with the environment and not be a "disturbance." Trails are needed, not only to provide direction and public safety to those unfamiliar to the desert, but also to keep most users in areas where impacts are minimal. Those who wish to hike or ride horses cross-country would still have these opportunities available.

To reduce costs of the trail system, BLM will emphasize use of volunteer groups for dugout and any necessary construction. As stated in a previous response, the vehicle route network will certainly be used for some non-motorized trails, particularly those specifically intended for mountain bike or equestrian riders.

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175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"MRAN notes that while many visitors prefer to hike, bike (we assume that means non-motorized biking) and ride horseback, a large number of visitors prefer to drive, motorbike, or ride their ATV in similar recreational pursuits. There should be monies appropriated for the development of motorized trails with the same level of planning as afforded non-motorized use. The need for trail guides is equally important to motorized users. The motorized use is current and demonstrated, they should receive at least the same consideration that potential mountain bike users do. The trails usable by motorized vehicles should be available to non-motorized vehicles. The chance for positive interaction increases. Unfortunately non-motorized trails preclude motorized use. There is nothing wrong with developing non-motorized use, MRAN believes that all such forms of use are appropriate for the East Mojave National Scenic Area. While MRAN compliments the BLM on the foresight to provide for mountain biking, we question the apparent lack of similar concern for motorcycling and ATV use.

MRAN considered the budget for non-motorized trail maintenance. Does this include the marking and improvements of new trails? This seems an inadequate amount if it does. Non-motorized recreation is very important to the multiple-use development of the East Mojave National Scenic Area. MRAN suggests that some of the money budgeted for the mountain bike and equestrian trail might be better spent on the development of regular hiking trails."

Response:

One other comment was received which requested the Bureau's attention to motorized trails as well as non-motorized. The Bureau agrees with the development and identification of motorized trails within the Scenic area which makes use of secondary roads in areas posing little conflict with other recreational pursuits. The Mojave Road and East Mojave Heritage Trail are excellent examples of such trails and are very popular. The Bureau wishes to make use of the expertise of groups such as the Motorcycle Racing Association of Nevada to assist in identifying, maintaining, and policing such trails.

As stated previously, most equestrian and mountain bike use will be located on existing routes of travel which will receive some interaction with motorized vehicles.

Non-motorized trail maintenance will hopefully be performed by volunteers and/or through the "Adopt-A-Trail" program which will cut costs significantly, thus the low budget figure reflected in the draft for such work.

B-8, B-9 Road and Trail Maintenance

38 [F.E. & Vivian Brant]
"We object to major road improvements that would possibly entice explorers rather than scenic visitors - however, to deter drivers from leaving the road, a reasonable effort could be expended in maintenance of roads to insure safe passage and eliminate detouring."

7 [Scott Anderson]
"I agree with your decision to limit road construction (page 51) and recommend road closures. This proposal should be expanded to limit/prohibit additional paving."

Response:

As stated in the draft plan, some road segments may be "hardened" to reduce road maintenance costs and/or reduce dust levels from increased vehicle use. "Hardened" refers to hard-packed gravel, or application of chemical compounds, not just paving. The county does plan to pave the graveled patches located at the south end of Kelbaker Road near I-40 to reduce the heavy, continuous maintenance presently needed to allow vehicle passage. Regular road maintenance will be restricted to the major arteries in the East Mojave which are required for general public access.

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8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"The Wildhorse Canyon Road is somewhat duplicative of the Black Canyon Road. It does provide access to the route down into the valley. What is the purpose of singling it and the Aiken Mine Road out for special attention? Does the BLM propose to "provide" the maintenance? Are these county roads or private? Who should be responsible for maintenance costs?"

Response:

Wildhorse Canyon Road is located on public land and maintained periodically by the Bureau. The Aikens Mine Road is maintained by private interests for access to an active cinder mine. These routes are increasingly being used by visitors to the East Mojave who don't have 4-wheel drive vehicles. They also provide an opportunity for scenic tours and have the potential for interpretive-site access. BLM is merely proposing to ensure regular maintenance.

124

67 [Patrick Colgan, Sierra Club-San Francisco Bay Chapter]
"You are right that ..."the existing approved access network is sufficient to meet public needs." Considering this clear statement, the following phrase — "New road construction, while not absolutely prohibited, is approved ... on a case-by-case basis" — contradicts the prior statement. We urge no further road building in this fragile area."

Response:

Some new route construction may be required to access private land, mining operations, new range improvements, or recreation sites. An environmental assessment would be prepared in each case to determine if there is a true need for the route, and if so, to provide access while minimizing environmental impacts.

B-10 Access Easements

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"Much of the current [easement] acquisition program is being driven by funds from the State OHV Commission. There are many other areas in more danger of development or destruction than those on the current priority list."

309 [Edward Waldheim, California Department of Parks and Recreation]
"Page 22 and 160 of report addresses need of additional land and easements, but yet no dollars are shown on Cost Analysis. Is the OHV commission to pay for some? If so, how much and when?"

Response:

Cost figures for easements are shown for FY 90-92. BLM will not consider easements until it is clear which lands will/will not be acquired in the Scenic Area. The State's Off-Highway Vehicle Fund is financing easement acquisition for the Mojave Road. Additional easements will be proposed in the future to support motorized as well as non-motorized users, and ensure access to significant areas.

C. Recreation Management

General Comments

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"The objectives do not meet the need to have controls in place. In fact, this section does not recognize that use has already exceeded capacity at some sites. We suggest modifying the goals to include the following:
*Maintain opportunities for dispersed, generally unstructured recreation.
*Provide necessary services and controls at both high and low intensity use sites.
*Direct use away from sensitive resources.
*Place special emphasis on meeting the needs of groups, disabled, and non-motorized activities."

5 [Harriet Allen]
"No thought has been given to the carrying capacity of various areas."

64 [Philippe Cohen, Granite Mountain Natural Reserve]
"It is very important that certain factors influencing the [Granite Mountain Natural] Reserve be considered before designating the Granite Pass area for camping. Specifically, the number of sites and the maximum number of people to be accommodated are important because of the area's proximity to the Dorner Camp facility. This area receives the largest number of user days at the Granites."

35 [Pete Bontadelli, California Department of Fish and Game]
"The Department [of Fish and Game] is concerned regarding the biological impact associated with the potential expansion of public recreational facilities and attendant increases in public use within this region of the Mojave Desert. Imposed recreational use expansion would result in long-term adverse impacts to desert fish and wildlife resources. It is apparent to us that protecting and preserving desert resources will require a substantial increase in enforcement of existing rules and regulations. Because this Plan may result in the loss of unique desert biological resources through expanded recreational use, we urge BLM to reconsider the proposals to expand public use facilities, and to adopt a modified management plan which would permit maintenance of existing fish and wildlife resources."

Response:

Several recreation actions in the final plan have been modified to better fulfill our objectives for dispersed recreation use and increased opportunities for nonmotorized use. Visitor facilities will be placed away from cultural sites, riparian areas, important wildlife habitat, and other key resources. One method of limiting impact (and enhancing primitive recreation opportunities) is to design these sites for a predetermined level of use. BLM will be establishing "limits of acceptable change," in association with use groups and other interested parties, for several recreation sites.

5 [Harriet Allen]
"Recreation opportunities and offerings should parallel the findings of the President's Commission on [Americans Outdoors]. Data from those findings should be included in the Final [Plan]."

Response:

The Commission's report reflects trends identified in user polls and testimony from individuals and groups having "on the ground" experience with outdoor recreation. The Scenic Area plan was drafted with input from some of these same sources, and reflects demand for opportunities which are appropriate for the area.

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8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"Very little consideration has been given to the special needs of the disabled, especially those confined to wheelchairs. Their difficulty with BLM's standard restrooms, few camping areas, and no trails with hardened surfaces makes their use of the area unnecessarily difficult."

Response:

Statements on handicapped access have been added to the final plan after consultation with representatives of Access California, a handicapped-rights group. The two campgrounds will be developed to allow wheelchair access; the Bureau will also design interpretive facilities to allow handicapped access where terrain permits.

C-1 through C-10 Information and Interpretation

General Comments

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"We agree with the "low -key" approach. Getting personnel out on the ground appears to be a low priority in the listing of C-1 to C-10. We feel that should be much higher, maybe even number one."

Response:

Items C-1 through 10 are not listed in order of importance. They involve BLM personnel doing a variety of interpretive activities working directly with the public as well as designing information to be made widely available. The interpretation program is designed to provide a well balanced program considering all forms of interpretation. Getting more BLM employees into the Scenic Area is a high priority, as indicated by our proposed increases in the number of patrol rangers for the Scenic Area.

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21 [Dana Bell and Thomas Getzfrid, AMA District 37]
"[We suggest] that the Bureau consider adopting a character, a Smokey the bear-like figure, to represent the Bureau and the California Desert Plan.

Desert wildlife offers a variety of characters to choose from: burros, tortoises, roadrunners, coyotes, rabbits, snakes (?), etc. The character(s) might be chosen and/or named by a contest through the desert district schools, interest groups or the general public. The contest would be a public relations tool to draw attention to the California Desert Plan and to enhance the image of the Bureau. The character(s) could be introduced with, or used to introduce, the East Mojave National Scenic Area Plan."

Response:

We thank you for your comment. We are already considering the possibility of this for the California Desert District.

C-1 Entry Point Information Signing

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"Funding for C-1 would not cover any entry sign or freeway sign construction costs. Where is the construction money to come from?"

Response:

The signs are already in place and the areas are scheduled for completion by 1988.

C-2 Interpretive Displays at Rest Areas, Other Sites

266 [R.W. Scott]
"An afterthought - How about a sign on I-40 or at the rest area to tell the travelers that they are driving through a Patton Training Camp. Seems like a neat idea to me."

Response:

This item was considered as part of the Desert Training Center Interpretive plan, finished in 1985. Fenner rest stop was identified as a good spot for a display of maps, Desert Training Center history, and historical photos.

C-3 Year-round Visitor Contact at Hole-in-the-Wall (no comments)

C-4 Establish Nine Desert Information Outposts

135 [Lynn Jacobs]
"I believe "desert information outposts" around the periphery of the area are a good idea. These could provide information on rules, regulations, and political boundaries, as well as giving the visitor an appreciation of the ecology and natural features of the area."

Response: Comment noted.

C-5 Establish Visitor Center at Kelso Depot

119 [Mary Ann Henry]
"The Kelso Depot must be retained in the Scenic Area and a Visitor contact station is a good use. The Kelso Depot is history."

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"Kelso Depot should be given a higher funding priority than that for Hole-in-the-Wall facilities. Kelso is really the heart of the East Mojave, accessible by paved roads, and the current building is deteriorating. Rather than building a new facility, BLM should take whatever monies it can to restore the fast crumbling Depot. If action is not taken soon, I fear, this special place may just be too far gone to restore at all."

165 [Robert Lamond]
"Kelso Depot should be utilized as a museum and interpretive center. The Interpretative Center at Hole-in-the-Wall is proper. We probably need interpretation/protection presence at Ft. Piute."

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"Regarding visitor centers, the main one at Hole-in-the-Wall seems particularly appropriate, especially to enhance the protective management of the Hole-in-the-Wall/Midhills area. A secondary interpretive center and ranger base at the historic and architecturally attractive Kelso Depot is also an excellent proposal. In this regard, we compliment both the BLM and the private Kelso Depot Fund, Inc., for their ongoing efforts to secure an agreement with the Union Pacific Railroad (the building's owner) that would assure saving this structure, making it available for a variety of appropriate public uses, and assisting with restorative repairs. The depot has long seemed to us, too, as not only a property well deserving of preservation/restoration, but as the logical place for a major interpretive and ranger base."

Response:

BLM has been working very closely with the non-profit Kelso Depot Fund, Inc. (two BLM employees are on the Board of Directors) to lease or purchase the structure from the Union Pacific Railroad. At this time (early 1988) several potential sources of funding are being explored, including private/corporate donations, State agency grants, or Federal appropriations. Until the question of ownership is resolved and work completed to bring the building and grounds up to applicable safety standards, no public use of the building can be made. BLM would like to use a portion of the Depot as a visitor center/museum, and will continue efforts to secure the building for public use. The Cost and Implementation Schedule in Part 4 assumes that restoration of the Depot would be federally funded, and includes costs for restoration, maintenance and interpretive displays.

C-6 Develop and Implement an Interpretive Plan

263 [Gerald Scherba, Desert Studies Consortium]
"The scope of the proposed interpretive effort makes no mention of geological features. Is there a reason for this? There are several features well worth mentioning in the interpretive program."

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"Increased interpretation is needed for the East Mojave. But, some of the proposed interpretive actions dealing with mining and utilities sound more like excuses for poor scenic quality controls. I would hope that mining scars and new microwave towers will always be recognized for the intrusions that they are. Necessary intrusions they could conceivably be, but the Bureau should not think that by telling people tin shacks are painted in earth tones that visual contrasts are really reduced, or become less objectionable."

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"The interpretive program is generally OK. The details in C-6 should be modified. Eliminate interpreting transmission lines and microwave towers. If the program to camouflage them is working then they won't be so visible. In its place should be a program to interpret the fantastic geologic structures of the East mojave - cinder cones, dome, caves, dunes, mesas, and the marvelous story told on the face of Pinto Mountain. If operating mines want to offer services to visitors, they may be encouraged to do so and assume the liability connected with having visitors at active mines, but publicly provided programs should be limited to the historic operations. C-7 should also include a Scenic Viewpoints program along the main routes."

175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"Additional interpretive displays are appropriate for the botanical, geological, historical, prehistorical, and current features of the East Mojave National Scenic Area. Cattle grazing, mining, railroading, and recreation are examples of current uses that would be appropriate for interpretive displays."

Response:

We received several letters mentioning interpretive topics which should be discussed in the Scenic Area. The plan has been revised to give a broader idea of possible topics that may be used to tell the story of the East Mojave.

The appropriate means of interpreting a topic will be decided based on the area or information to be conveyed to the public. Off-site interpretation may be used when on-site interpretation is determined inappropriate or to ensure protection of the resource. The basic topics will include Environmental Education, natural resources (plants, animals, geology) historical and cultural resources (travel, explorers, cultural heritage, mining, homesteading) and other uses, past, present, and future. This may include man's benefits, how man interacts or uses the land. It may also include information on BLM policies and objectives. All of these will give the entire picture of the desert environment. Topics may be changed or adapted to new needs or information to provide visitors with the most accurate and update information.

Interpretation of active mines, or of resources on private property, would be through cooperative agreements with mine operators or property owners. Information, overlooks and other details would be coordinated by BLM.

Most viewpoints, and interpretive sites or displays will be along or within easy access of maintained roads for all visitors to enjoy. Table 2-6 in the draft plan gave examples of areas being considered; the exact site or placement has not been determined.

For interpretation of cultural resources, off-site education will be used so as not to divulge the location of cultural sites. On-site interpretive signing may be provided in a manner that does not "advertise" the resource but explains the values and need for compliance with protective laws. Only when a site can be protected or is already well known will BLM invite visitors to the area.

283 [Glenn Stewart, Desert Tortoise Council]
"We do not think you have seriously considered the impacts of your interpretive program on the desert tortoise populations. If you had, we do not think you would have published the map showing the prime tortoise areas. We strongly recommend that you do not:

1. Publish in brochures, show on maps, or have available to the general public the information on tortoise densities.

2. Place signs indicating the presence of desert tortoises in the area.

Instead, we recommend that you:

1. Place general information about the laws protecting the desert tortoise from collecting and vandalism on all maps, brochures, at camp grounds, etc.

2. Place general information on what the public should do if they find a tortoise on the road, etc. Such information has been developed in draft form by the District's Desert Tortoise Work Group.

3. Place general information on the importance of the tortoise to the State of California, as a natural resource, as a key member of the ecosystem on all maps, brochures, display boards, etc.

We urge you to engage in discussions with the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee about problems at the Desert Tortoise Natural Area, in dealing with visitors in the general area, and other, similar issues. The Committee has had a great deal of experience on what should be done, what is successful, and what has failed."

Response:

The map in the plan is not part of the interpretation program but part of the planning process to show reasons for management decisions.

As far as the interpretive program we thank you for your recommendations in reference to the tortoise. These same principles are being used and developed to cover other plants, animals and resources needing protection or protected by law already.

175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"MRAN has special interest in the Fort Piute area. We recognized the unique status of the riparian ecosystem. While MRAN members have used this area for

motorcycle recreation in the past, this use was voluntarily discontinued as we realized that our activity was not compatible with the increased use of the area. MRAN contends that while our use in the early 70's was compatible, the present management reflect higher and currently appropriate types of use. MRAN has special interest in the Fort Piute Area...MRAN would like to review the [interpretive] plan for Piute Creek with special interest in the development of interpretive and educational facilities. They would gladly share any special knowledge they might possess with your recreational planners."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"Piute Creek already has an "interpretive trail". It was printed in the first Guide [to the Mojave Road]."

Response:

People interested in volunteering for the benefit of their public lands are always welcome. An interpretive brochure/guide has already been produced, and other types of material and information will be developed to meet the management goals of the area. Suggestions for the area will be looked at and given consideration.

C-7 Develop Interpretive Sites

175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"MRAN questions whether an adequate amount of money is budgeted for interpretive displays at other sites. Displays like the Cima Dome display just off Cima Road greatly add to the 'desert experience'."

Response:

Funding levels shown for action C-7 assume that two or three interpretive sites will be developed each year. Costs are for site plans and interpretive signing or displays. The amount actually budgeted may increase or decrease based on design standards adopted in the interpretive plan called for in action C-6.

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175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"MRAN would hope that a Visitor Center could be established at Zzyzx. This area is unique and interesting. The history is exciting and this is a great place to educate the public to the wonders of the East Mojave National Scenic Area."

107 [Wayne Guerrini]
"I would like to see some way that Zzyzx could be opened more to the public. The history of Dr. Springer and his goings-on add much the color and history of the East Mojave. Currently, the public doesn't have much access to this area. I realize this would have to be coordinated with the California State University system."

Response:

A Visitor Center was built this past year at Soda Springs. A variety of natural and cultural history displays are being developed by the Barstow Resource Area for display. The Visitor Center will be open for day use seven days a week by fall of 1988. Self guiding tours will be supplemented by Volunteer guides and special tours by prior arrangement.

252 [Robert Reynolds, San Bernardino County Museum]
"I respectfully disagree with the suggestion for interpretive signing at the Dinosaur Trackways ACEC. The San Bernardino County Museum has been extremely careful not to divulge the location of the trackways to the casual public, and is rigorous in reburying trackways which are exposed during the course of our cooperative efforts with the BLM to make casts of the trackways. Interpretive signing would draw attention to a fragile, unique, and extremely significant paleontologic resource, and could result in damage or destruction of the resource through unauthorized collecting or vandalism. Signing would also be in conflict with the Dinosaur Trackway Management Plan of 1982 (referenced on page 193 of this plan) which calls for discouragement of access and unsupervised usage.

A more general interpretive sign, located away from the trackways and away from the access road to the site, could be of value in pointing out the faults, folds, and sedimentary units that are so well exposed in the Mescal Range and which can be seen in their entirety from the road east of the range on the valley floor. Additionally, the Museum plans to develop replicas of the trackways. Using these replicas, displays could be developed away from the site at BLM Interpretive Centers and in Barstow and Needles."

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"What exactly would be interpreted at Dinosaur Trackways? My own visits to the area have revealed some covered over rubble heaps where the digs took place. Did I miss something?"

Response:

We agree with commenters on this issue. We feel that Dinosaur Trackway is worthy of interpretation and continued protection. Off site interpretation will be considered and we will work with San Bernardino County Museum to determine the best method of interpreting the resource.

C-8, C-9 Information Sheets/Other Publications

21 [Dana Bell and Thomas Getzfrid, AMA]
"[We] suggest that handout material, particularly Area guides, be inexpensive and designed to update at minimal cost. These guides should be free to visitors, prominently displayed at all service facilities on routes approaching the Area, available at all access points into the EMNSA, and carried by all Area rangers. Guides should stress where visitors may go and what they may do."

Response:

The majority of the information BLM provides for visitors is free and will continue to be so as much as possible. The Visitor Services staff and all Rangers already carry information about the area. Entry points and the Desert Information Outposts will carry information on the area.

C-10 Cooperating Associations

150 [Pat Keeling]
"There are many markets and vendors available to bid on sales materials, and one company such as the Southwest National History Association will not do an adequate procurement for the BLM. Their staff is too slow to respond to need and the budget presented on P. 130 is not adequate."

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"We also support and encourage the proposal to publish a uniform and attractive series of interpretive pamphlets, maps, schedules of events, etc., and to provide for the sale of relevant books and other publications relating to the East Mojave and the desert in general, through a cooperating natural history association, much as is frequently the case in national parks."

251 [Robert and Jennifer Reynolds]
"We would make "cooperating natural history association" plural. The County Museum Association, for example, regularly publishes popular and semi-technical natural history and cultural quarterlies, many of which relate to the East Mojave. In fact, BLM might wish to explore the possibility of using the Museum Association to distribute and/or publish certain studies and guides in a cooperative effort."

Response:

C-10 lists the Cooperating Association currently providing sales material for the California Desert District. The Needles Resource Area will consider working with other groups willing to provide publications for distribution.

C-11, C-12 Recreational Vehicle Trails

Mojave Road

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"a. We repeat our opposition to a procedure in which routes across WSA's were acceded to, areas were designated for camping, monuments erected, and the public directed to archaeological sites prior to even an EA being prepared on the Mojave Road. Most egregious is that in addition, the BLM proceeded to request more than a million dollars from the State of California to acquire lands along this route prior to its environmental review. We know of no State review of the impact of its granting the money.

The belated review of the project in this document does not excuse the improper procedures used. In the face of BLM ignoring all of our requests for appropriate review more than two years ago, it is very difficult for us to evaluate the proposal on its merits.

The detailed maps of the route, the factual content and point of view in the guidebook which BLM is advising the public use and many other details are missing from this document. The analysis of the impact on sensitive resource areas and ACEC's which this route traverses or passes near are missing from this document. Did the ACEC plan for Rock Springs assess the impact of the Mojave Road designation? Where are the estimates of appropriate use? We have no reason to trust the statement on page 72 that "BLM will work with users to determine what a desirable standard for use levels would be, based on demand and objectives for environmental protection." We have seen no evidence of addressing any environmental concerns with respect to this route.

b. Item 4 in the proposed management policy proposes limiting people to 30 minutes at springs. How does BLM intend to monitor and enforce this and other policies?

c. Item 7 says that this Plan is for 1987-1996. Why is it not consistent with the framework for the EMNSA management plan? How will it be revised? Does the 1987 date mean that it is already in force? If so, why wasn't it circulated to the public previously for comment?

d. One last concern. As originally conceived, the Mojave Road was a local designation. Now it is being proposed for National designation. What is the expected impact of such a designation? What are the visitor use levels projected from advertising this as the first National Recreational Trail? We suggest that you seek another term besides trail."

Response:

The Mojave Road has been developed into a recreational trail through the efforts of a private group known as the Friends of the Mojave Road. Because the route uses established vehicle routes and did not entail construction of facilities or additional surface disturbance, the project did not require BLM approval and an environmental assessment. The Friends of the Mojave Road have been very cooperative in consulting with BLM on this project, and have added text to the "Guide to the Mojave Road" explaining BLM policies on Wilderness Study Areas and sensitive resources. The Guide is one of the best teaching tools for environmental awareness currently available for the California Desert. Several books and articles have recently been published on the California Desert, including 'Sierra Club Books' Adventuring in the California Desert, which encourage visitor use in sensitive areas. It is the author's choice to consult with BLM or other agencies on the content of those materials. One option available to BLM is to close roads or areas to vehicle use if information presented in these publications leads to unacceptable levels of impact, which has so far not occurred along the Mojave Road. Limitations on use outlined in the Mojave Road policy in the Scenic Area plan should be sufficient to minimize impacts as the levels increase. Existing routes in WSAs may be used by the public unless such use impairs the area's wilderness suitability. BLM monitors these portions of the Mojave Road, and has seen no evidence of impairment. In ACECs, use of the Mojave Road was considered during the planning process for each area.

The 30 minute limit for stopping at springs is an existing regulation, implemented through signing and enforced by BLM rangers and State Fish and Game wardens.

Planning periods have been revised for the Mojave Road and Scenic Area plan to cover the period 1988-1997. A draft version of the Mojave Road policy was sent for comment to the Friends of the Mojave Road, and key points discussed with Sierra Club officials by telephone.

Designation as a National Recreation Trail will increase recognition of the route's availability for recreational use. The Mojave Road policy calls for the eventual establishment of a permit system and control of use levels through consultation with users.

134 [Thomas Jackson]
"Apparently your employees contact a totally different group of people using the Mojave Road than I do. Without a doubt, most people I contact using the Mojave Road are driving 4-wheeled drive vehicles or VW Baja Bugs which are licensed by the various states of registration as highway operated vehicles. How do you justify using off-highway vehicle funds to support a group that, based on the vehicles they operate, do not warrant this support?"

Response:

About 73% of the off-highway vehicle fund is derived from a fixed portion of State gasoline tax receipts. Registration fees for unlicensed vehicles account for less than 10% of the fund.

138 [Bruce Jensen]
"The Mojave Road should be open only to hikers and horses in places where it traverses wilderness."

207 [Robert McDowell]
"Mojave Road use should be by permit only on those sections that pass through WSAS, regardless of group size. Pullout areas, parking and camping areas along the road should only be at specific locations where impacts of these uses are minimized."

Response:

The Management Policy for the Mojave Road was designed to provide limits on use. No camping will be allowed along the Mojave Road in wilderness study areas, which should eliminate most activities that could result in impairment. There is no evidence that vehicle use on these segments of the Mojave Road is causing impairment.

160 [Steve Kuehl, CORVA]
"Consideration should be given to make this route a part of the Statewide Motorized Trails System. Other proposed routes should be given this same consideration. Nowhere does the Plan mention SMTS and this should be addressed."

Response:

Many Mojave Road users have expressed misgivings about the Mojave Road's incorporation into the Statewide Motorized Trail System, feeling that such a designation would encourage use by visitors without a guidebook or a real interest in the historic nature of the route. The Statewide Motorized Trail System is discussed on page 70 of the draft Scenic Area Plan.

East Mojave Heritage Trail (Ivanpah Loop)

55 [Dennis Casebier, Friends of the Mojave Road]
"We recommend that the entire EMHT be included in your management plan for the East Mojave."

251 [Robert & Jennifer Reynolds]
"(We) are particularly concerned about the likelihood that the development of an "Ivanpah Loop" will serve to funnel recreational vehicle traffic into areas best suited for specific hiking, camping, sightseeing, and scientific and cultural studies. The area does not need to be targeted toward recreational driving per se."

Response:

The first segment of the East Mojave Heritage Trail has been added to the final Scenic Area plan. The Heritage Trail follows existing routes of travel in remote areas which are not often visited but contain many features of interest to potential visitors. By use of a guide book, education and interpretation along this route will provide a safe and enjoyable visit while causing no impacts to the environment or disturbance to other recreationists who might be in the area.

Additional Trails

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"Any BLM endorsement of a route must include appropriate notice to interested parties and full environmental review."

225 [Jeffrey Opkepke, US Fish & Wildlife Service]
"Management proposal C-12 indicates that additional interpretive trails will be developed throughout the Scenic Area. The proposal seemingly states that only existing roads would be used for these trails but this is somewhat ambiguous. The Service recommends that only existing roads be used and that this be indicated clearly in the text. We recommend that the Bureau should also monitor these routes for evidence of off-road use and take appropriate action to stop infractions, if they occur."

254 [Elizabeth Ridgely]
"Developing the Barnwell to Searchlight railroad grade would be akin to demolishing it."

Response:

All interpreted vehicle trails will be developed on existing routes of travel. In fact, no vehicle use is allowed elsewhere. An environmental assessment would be prepared if new surface disturbance would result; for example, at an interpretive site or designated camping area. BLM would consult with interested groups to ensure that routes which are developed for interpretation are acceptable to the targeted audience. Historic routes such as the Barnwell to Searchlight railroad bed may be considered for development as interpreted trails. Vehicles have used this route for decades, with little adverse impact. Development for recreation may actually help preserve the route through measures adopted to keep the railroad bed passable to vehicles.

C-13 through C-17 Camping

General Comments

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"One of the realities of visitor use in the EMNSA is that although visitors may arrive in individual vehicles, they usually are part of a larger group. Encouragement of group use of the desert is reflected in recreation publications, ORV magazines, 4WD books, and interpretive guides. Visitors who are part of a group will not disperse willingly but will seek out any site large enough to contain their group, regardless of local impact to sensitive resources, or the fact that the site may be on private land. Group use is only marginally addressed in this plan. We suggest a thorough evaluation of the existing campground locations, and all of the "designated" campgrounds for sensitive resources, and appropriateness to group use, and close, relocate, or redesign all those with problems."

Response:

Six other commenters are concerned with providing sufficient facilities for group use. The Bureau is very much aware of the need to accommodate groups for overnight use in the Scenic Area. Such facilities will be developed in the Mid Hills Campground, and included in a redesigned Hole-in-the-Wall Campground.

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119 [Mary Ann Henry]
"There must be enforced generator hours in developed campgrounds. I suggest that generator hours be 10 am to 2 pm so as not to infringe on the rights of other campers to have peace and quiet in the mornings, late afternoon, and evening so as to hear the natural sounds of the desert."

Response:

Quiet hours at the two maintained campgrounds are currently 10 pm to 8 am. The Bureau will actively seek and implement the use of "Campground Hosts" who will reside at the campground and have authority to maintain, monitor, and control use of these areas according to established rules, regulations, and procedures for such use. Campground regulations include time periods when unnecessary noise will not be allowed, along with many other regulations needed to provide an enjoyable experience while protecting the resources.

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246 [Robert Ramsay]
"CAMPING - All camping should be restricted to formal camp grounds. There should be no camping at Caruthers Canyon, Fort Piute, and Rock Creek."

Response:

There are many visitors wishing to experience the beauty, quietness, and serenity offered by the East Mojave. Making use of existing sites on secondary roads in more remote areas for overnight camping meets these needs. By eliminating the 600' corridor, impacts to the environment by such users will be negligible.

C-13 Establish Designated Camping Areas

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"As for other designated but less developed possible camping areas, we would urge again that they not be established virtually on top of or within the primary ecological or scenic attraction. At Caruthers Canyon, for example, we strongly urge that a designated camping area be established nearby but not within the main ecologically significant and sensitive area. A trail could lead into the latter from both the camping area and day-use parking area. And the fragile part of the canyon would then be closed to motor vehicles — thus enhancing the protection of the unique natural values there. As visitation continues to increase in the future, this kind of protective planning/ development would inevitably have to come. Better that it be accomplished appropriately now, rather than at some later date after increased, perhaps irreparable impairment has been allowed to occur."

133 [Robin Ives]
"Camping should be prohibited in sensitive riparian areas and adjacent to springs that are critical for wildlife. This includes Fort Piute, Caruthers Canyon, and Rock Creek. More campsites should be constructed. The BLM has done a very fine job in its Midhills campsites."

138 [Bruce Jensen]
"Campgrounds should be planned with respect to a few criteria. 1) The area should not be too close to any very popular spot. (Yosemite Valley is an extreme example of what happens in a case such as this.) 2) The general spacing of the grounds should be to spread the people around, and to encourage walking to points of interest within that district. 3) Above all, important resources, scenic and otherwise, should not be in danger from high camper density. Your ideas for campground expansion and distribution do not seem to follow these rules. Please rethink your placement of camps."

21 [Dana Bell & Tom Getzfrid, AMA District]
"A greater number of small, dispersed, primitive, designated campsites are necessary. To reduce conflicts between interest groups, some campsites should be designated for non-motorized camping only."

Response:

BLM concurs with comments received regarding the siting of designated camping areas, and intends to use those guidelines when proposing specific locations for these areas. The Scenic Area plan proposes several general locations based on current use patterns. The intent is not to "spoil" these areas, but to minimize impact by identifying nearby, appropriate sites to accommodate increases in use levels. Establishment of these designated areas will direct visitors to these "cleared" areas, thereby reducing use in more sensitive backcountry areas. As use increases, more "designated camping" areas will be identified.

C-14 Allow Camping Adjacent to Roads

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"We strongly agree with the proposal to restrict roadside camping from the present 300-foot roadside width to only the immediate roadside (15 feet or so). We would urge, though, that the document provide for the opportunity to ban roadside camping altogether along certain sensitive stretches of road. This need is likely to become increasingly critical as use escalates in the future."

85 [Donald Falk, Desert Survivors]
"Desert survivors commends the proposal to revoke the 600-foot corridor for off-road travel currently allowed along every existing route."

80 [Ed Dunkley, CA4WD]
"The other major concern lies in the deletion of a long standing rule regarding camping within 100-300 feet of a designated route. This is a standard rule adopted by both Forest Service and BLM over the years, and a generally accepted guideline for all campers to locate a temporary campsite. The rule provides for direct access to temporary campsites provided the ground is dry or rocky, no vegetation is damaged or destroyed, no streams or meadows are crossed, and such access is not otherwise prohibited. This rule has served well over the years and should work in the EMNSA. We don't believe it would be enforceable, as people just don't like to camp in the road."

283 [Glenn Stewart, Desert Tortoise Council]
"Item C-14. We support the limitation on parking and stopping of motorized vehicles for camping along routes. We also request that no designated parking or viewing areas be placed in crucial desert tortoise habitat."

150 [Pat Keeling]
"Recommend that you do not limit (vehicle camping up to) 300 feet off approved routes. Many dangers exist that were not taken into consideration while camping next to the roadway."

7 [Scott Anderson]

"This (proposal) is difficult to interpret. If you are suggesting "No camping in pullouts on obscure dirt roads," then I disagree. If you are saying you can still use pullouts but can't go 300 yards off the road with a vehicle, then I agree. Please clarify this proposal."

Response:

Many commenters apparently misunderstood the intent of this action, thinking that BLM was going to allow vehicle camping only along maintained or heavily travelled roads. BLM agrees that camping along such roads would indeed present a safety concern, but notes that nearly all backcountry camping takes place along or at the end of secondary or primitive roads. The intent is not to have visitors camp "in the road," but in previously used areas at the end of these routes or at pullouts that have served as campsites before. There are literally hundreds of these sites available for use.

The rationale for action C-14 in the final plan explains BLM intent to reduce conflicts with other resources from camping. No designated camping areas will be established in crucial desert tortoise habitat, but casual or backcountry camping will be allowed to continue so long as use levels remain low, and areas of existing disturbance are used.

C-15, C-16 Improve Mid Hills & Hole-in-the-Wall Campgrounds

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"Mid Hills is a lovely, well designed campground. Please do not expand it! Access to the surrounding Pinon/Juniper Forest is very important, as is the feeling of privacy by the heavy vegetative screening. It should not be expanded at the risk of either of these two benefits. The proposed expansion for equestrian groups and large groups, by its very nature, calls for a large, open area. Mid Hills should not be expected to answer this additional burden. In so expanding the area, BLM risks ruining many of the qualities that make it such an attractive place right now. Actions b and c seem called for, but the road should not be paved or widened (d). Additional water systems are uncalled for because expansion in this place is uncalled for."

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"We support the proposal to expand the existing Hole-in-the-Wall and Midhills campgrounds. All of the improvements suggested for Midhills are worthwhile. Concerning Hole-in-the-Wall, we strongly urge that an upgraded/expanded campground be relocated to a site nearby, rather than virtually on top of the very scenic/geologic attraction that is of major interest to visitors. The presence of campground facilities and of campers' vehicles, etc., can only impair the general visitor's quality of experience at Hole-in-the-Wall. We strongly urge that now — before a major investment is made in upgrading and expanding the campground — is the time to shift this facility away from the immediate area and viewshed of Hole-in-the-Wall. This shift might only require a few hundred yards to bring about an enormous enhancement of the Hole-in-the-Wall. A carefully laid out trail could then link the new campground with the path leading down and through the Hole-in-the-Wall formations. Likewise, a day-use parking area (and picnic area?) should be established somewhat away from the main scenic attraction, so that visitors may

view the feature without a foreground of motor vehicles. Again, a short trail could connect the parking area to the Hole-in-the-Wall path."

7 [Scott Anderson]
Proposal C-16. "I disagree/oppose the regrading of sites at Hole-in-the-Wall for the benefit of RV's. If they can't rough it, let them go and find a "KOA" campground."

150 [Pat Keeling]
"Recommend a new campground at Von Trigger plateau-off Lanfair Road, and one in Joshua Tree at Hart Mine Road with similar large areas for family and group areas as suggested in C-15. Agree that the area of Mid Hills Campground should have an area for large group users. Please plan to remake the road and pave it from Black Canyon to the Mid Hills Campground for better access. Recommend that water supply at Hole-in-the-Wall and Mid Hills Campgrounds should be available 12 months of the year. Make water available in all new campgrounds also, year round."

131 [Elden Hughes, Sierra Club-Angeles Chapter]
"Additional formal camping areas will need to be built. Both Mid Hills and Hole-in-the-Wall are at relative high elevation. Winter is the main season. It can get very cold at both campgrounds. We would recommend a campground at a lower elevation. Possibly this could be in the vicinity of the Kelso Depot when that becomes an interpretive center. The growth in numbers of visitors will likely bring the less experienced in desert camping. Formal campgrounds fill their needs.

Response:

BLM received may comments regarding the two developed campgrounds, most against any major new developments which would disturb additional wildlife habitat at Mid Hills, or continue camping in the most scenic portion of the Hole-in-the-Wall area.

The Bureau concurs with the main points made in the above comments, and has revised the Scenic Area plan to scale back the proposed enlargement of Mid Hills, and relocate camping at the Hole-in-the-Wall area.

Many visitors now use recreational vehicles while in the desert, and are unable to use many sites at either campground because of excessive slope or limited space. It is in the Bureau's responsibility to manage the area in a way to allow for visitor enjoyment while adequately protecting it's natural resources. Providing level and graded access into developed recreation sites is a part of this responsibility.

New developed campgrounds are not proposed, as they are not in keeping with our objective to maintain the primitive, rustic character of the East Mojave. Our intent is to accommodate increasing demands for camping through designation and minimal improvements at several sites (C-14). BLM will keep in mind suggestions made by commenters (such as Pat Keeling) as to possible locations for future designations.

Access into Mid Hills will be improved through more frequent grading of the route, but BLM has no plans to pave the road from Black Canyon Road to the campground. Water is already available at the two developed campgrounds. The designated camping areas referred to in action C-14 would most likely not be supplied with water for several years.

C-17 Sewage Dump Stations

150 [Pat Keeling]
"(I) recommend that there be four sewer-septic dumping stations, and four dump sites for trash in the Scenic Area."

Response:

Commercially available sewage dump stations near the Scenic Area will be made known to area visitors. The concept of providing a few well-located dump sites for trash has merit, and will be discussed with the County.

C-18 Recreation Site Maintenance

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"We do not understand the proposed funding. Is this replacement money, staff, or trucks?"

227 [Gary and Linda Overson]
"Maintenance: The signs, more camping facilities, trails, information centers, etc. are all a good idea if they are maintained properly and regularly. Who is going to empty all the trash cans and clean up around the primitive camping sites that you propose? With increased visitor usage, there will be more trash and littering. There are some monies shown budgeted for FY '89 through '92 for maintaining recreation sites, but does this include replacing signs, etc. that have been vandalized, cleaning up around the information centers and primitive campgrounds, and along roads to those areas? Since garbage is so visually offensive, and any increase in visitors will bring an increase in garbage, I don't think there has been enough attention given to this matter."

Response:

As visitor use increases and creates a need for increase in facilities, a larger staff of maintenance personnel is required to care for these facilities. Vehicle additions and materials needed for upkeep are also included in the funding proposal.

C-19 through C-22 Emergency Services and Public Safety

Firearm Use

The issue of firearm use in the Scenic Area received a large number of comments. The majority of respondents (over 90%) requested that target shooting be eliminated from the East Mojave. Over 50% requested additional closures to all firearm use, including increases in the size of closures around recreational sites. Several commenters (about 10%) felt that proposed restrictions were not justified, that the real issue is proper enforcement of existing federal, state or county regulations.

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7 [Scott Anderson]
"Under "Recreation Management," page 77, you propose limited "no shooting" safety zones. I suggest expanding this proposal. While hiking in many areas of the EMNSA, in the Providence, Granite, and New York mountains, and even around Hole-in-the-Wall and other areas, I've heard the sound of bullets whizzing by, echoing off the canyon walls. Fear of getting shot aborted a Granite Mountain backpack due to several target shooting groups who were roaming around firing at anything and everything that moved.

Peace and serenity is one of my top objectives in an EMNSA visit. Too many times this objective has been shattered."

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"We very strongly support the proposal to designate "no shooting" safety zones — around the Midhills/Wildhorse Canyon/Hole-in-the-Wall area and other recreation sites, and around the Piute Creek ACEC. We urge that the document provide for the opportunity to designate additional no-shooting zones as needed in the future.

We also very strongly support no-target-shooting zones — around the easterly end of the Granite Mountains and Kelso Dunes. However, we urge that these proposed zones should be changed to the broader "no-shooting" designation, as they are both extremely prime scenic attractions that draw non-shooting visitors year-round. These magnificent sites will become increasingly popular with the general visitor in the years to come. I can speak first-hand on this concern, as I have visited the East Mojave during the beautiful autumn days of the hunting season, and was simply forced to avoid the Sheep Corral and other scenic easterly parts of the Granites at that time for fear of being accidentally shot.

We also suggest that at least some of the eastern slope of the Providence Mountains in the vicinity of the Providence Mountains State Recreation Area be designated as a no-shooting area, so that visitors to this park and the Mitchell Caverns will not have their experience impaired in the autumn or at other seasons by the sound of firearms.

Caruthers Canyon is another area deserving of complete no-shooting designation.

We would suggest that such no-shooting areas are really important as "havens for people." Furthermore, overwhelmingly the majority of the California Desert is open to target shooting and hunting. These relatively small closures should be part of the "model multiple-use management" of the East Mojave."

64 [Philippe Cohen, Granite Mountain Natural Reserve) "I just want to emphasize the importance of establishing the Granites as a no shooting safety zone. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1987, the Reserve experienced 2,498.5 user days from 850 users. Reservations for Reserve use suggest that this next fiscal year we will experience at least a 20% increase in use. Prospects for continued growth in use are quite good. With numerous classes and researching using the area, shooting activity not only poses a severe danger, but can be a major disruption to field studies. Therefore, I strongly encourage the designation of a no-shooting zone at the Granites, and that this designation be vigorously enforced."

283 [Glenn Stewart, Desert Tortoise Council]
"We cannot urge you strongly enough to prohibit use of firearms of any kind between March 15 and October 15 in desert tortoise habitat. With publication of this Plan and with increased visitor use, we can expect to see a tremendous increase in vandalism of tortoises. On page 151, you note that 40% of visitors shoot and plink (the activity that leads to vandalism). The number of people using tortoise habitat and the frequency of gunshot deaths of tortoises are highly correlated. Please review the published report by K. H. Berry on gunshot deaths in tortoises."

58 [Jayne Chavez-Scales, California Turtle & Tortoise Club]
"Signs should quote Regulation 5000 of the California Fish and Game Code (Title 14-California Administrative Code). Regulation 5000: "It is unlawful to sell, purchase, harm, take, possess, transport, or shoot any projectile at a tortoise (Gopherus)."

190 [Ray Miller]
"The one-half mile "no-shooting" safety zone around developed recreational areas should be expanded to one mile for small arms and two miles for large caliber center fire weapons. Several weapon and ammo load configurations produce projectiles with kill velocities that extend well beyond the one-half mile range. It will be impossible for the BLM to monitor every weapon type used in the area, therefore, I would like to see a wider safety margin added to this proposal."

107 [Wayne Guerrini]
"I would like to see a 1.5 mile corridor along either side of the Mojave Road that is totally banned to firearms of any kind. Previously, I had stated one half mile would be adequate. As you know, many rifles have ranges in excess of a mile, and I feel that an extra mile would provide a better margin of safety. The Afton Canyon Area should be completely closed to firearms of any kind, due to its sensitive environmental nature.

I would like to see a two mile buffer zone around any Wilderness Area, so that these areas can be adequately protected. The two miles should come out of the existing Wilderness Area, though."

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"As noted in my comments at the beginning of this missive, closing only some areas to shooting is just begging for trouble. For one thing, I learned in my hunter's safety course that many bullets travel up to one mile. A half-mile closure is therefore inadequate to provide for public safety. For another, many other ACEC's are not considered for shooting closure. What about the Soda Lake area and its nearby Desert Studies Center? But, this is only one example. BLM will be plagued with problems from armed, dangerous, and frequently foolish gun users until it does what is right and what is needed. Close the Scenic Area to target shooters!

BLM quotes current laws that will also be enforced concerning gun use. Hoo! These laws are currently not obeyed, and they will continue not to be obeyed."

28 [Rob and Kate Blair]
"We are in support of the overall trend to consolidate visitor use into a manageable area. As residents in the scenic area, we find that hunters do the greatest damage to the environment. We would like to see this problem addressed somewhere in the management plan."

207 [Bob McDowell]
"All of EMNSA should be closed to recreational shooting, except for hunting done in accordance with state gaming regulations. Non-hunting recreational shooting is potentially dangerous, causes a trash problem with expelled shotgun shells and casings, damage plants and wildlife habitat, and creates potential major conflicts with other user groups. I cannot stress too strongly, shooting is an inappropriate activity in EMNSA and should be completely banned. It has absolutely no benefits for the area, it only benefits the selfish, self gratification of the shooter. Just because BLM cannot be in all locations at all times to enforce these rules does not mean that those rules should not exist."

254 [Elizabeth Ridgely]
"Establish "no-shooting" safety zones around wildlife and livestock waters, developed and undeveloped as well. This could be coordinated through the San Bernardino County Ordinances."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"The proposed "no-shooting" zone around the campgrounds is a bit big. We feel it will hurt the hunters as well as those who want to plink. Why would the sand dunes be closed? They might be the safest place to shoot. We are not sure that the large closure to shooting needs to be forced on the public because of the UC system in the Granites area. We feel that most of the shooting problems can be handled with enforcement of existing regulations."

150 [William Keeling]
"I wish to protest the no shooting zone from Mid Hill to Hole-in-the-Wall Area. This has been used by hunters from October to January for many years, and some 90% of these hunters use the area for hunting and camping. It could be closed to rifles -- but opened to shotguns for upland game birds and rabbits. The rest of the report seems to be fine."

71 [David Daniel]
"Now that I better understand them, I am generally in agreement with the proposals included in the Draft Plan. I am, however, completely opposed to the proposed no-shooting "safety zones" around Mid Hills, Hole-in-the-Wall, and Piute Springs. I have hunted in these areas for more than 30 years and I feel that their closure would be a disservice to legitimate hunters and would not represent the same balanced use approach that is prevalent throughout the rest of the Draft Plan.

Response:

The California Department of Fish and Game as well as key interest groups and legislators were contacted to determine how a restriction on target shooting could be worded to make sense to the general public, how it would be enforced, and whether such rules would actually deal with the issue and concerns.

There was general agreement that a ban on firearm use is justified in areas of high visitor use, but that otherwise existing regulations are sufficient to protect visitors so long as enforcement is adequate. Most of the individuals who were contacted felt that a division between hunting-related shooting and target shooting or plinking was artificial and not enforceable in any practical way. The Final Plan proposes an increase in staffing, including Rangers, to provide user information and enforcement.

The final plan proposes two large "no shooting" zones at Piute Creek and the Granite Mountains which are high-use areas with identified shooting conflicts; 1/2 mile "no shooting" zones around the two developed campgrounds and additional recreation sites as they are developed; a "no shooting" zone on a small area of public lands within the Providence Mountain State Recreation Area; 50-yard restrictions along County maintained roads and the Mojave Road; and adoption of a County ordinance for BLM ranger enforcement. Hunting seasons will be posted to warn other visitors of the activity, and regulations on firearm use will be posted at entry areas and printed in publications for general distribution to Scenic Area visitors.

The Bureau also considered special restrictions for Caruthers Canyon, Kelso Dunes, and crucial desert tortoise areas. Use at Caruthers Canyon (a very popular hunting area) is not high enough to warrant closure to firearm use, but BLM will monitor firearm-related conflicts in the area. Firearm activity at Kelso Dunes is extremely limited, while visibility is outstanding, thereby eliminating any serious public safety concern. State Fish and Game regulations already prohibit the firing of any projectile at the desert tortoise. This is clearly an issue of enforcement which can be handled by BLM proposals to increase our ranger force and increase visitor awareness through signing and publications.

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23 [Tom Bennett, San Bernardino County Fish and Game Commission]
"There are two references made in this document which we feel are in error. The first is on page 116, second paragraph, referring to rocky mountain mule deer. The statement that the East Mojave supplies one-quarter of the County's annual deer take (about 25) is not true. The D-14 area, which is only the San Bernardino Mountains, produces 200-250 deer each year. Also, on page 149, second paragraph, the same reference is made."

64 [Philippe Cohen, Granite Mountain Natural Reserve]
"The argument that closing an area to firearm use for safety reasons and then claiming this would be an advantage to archery hunters is a specious one. Archery can be every bit as dangerous in such areas as hunting. If safety is the rationale, then neither activity should be allowed."

Response:

Errors regarding hunting opportunities have been corrected in the final plan. Commenters at the Needles public meeting also pointed out that, contrary to statements on page 77 of the draft plan, upland game hunting opportunities are good to excellent at Piute Creek.

Emergency Services

5 [Harriet Allen]
"Establish a heliport pad. Have a Medivac at the Hole-in-the-Wall fire station 12 months out of the year. Have an EMT III for medical emergencies and disasters for 12 months at a time, at Hole-in-the-Wall fire station. Establish emergency telephone at Mid Hill Campground year round. It is 80 miles to the call box at the freeway."

Response:

Due to the infrequency of serious medical emergencies occurring in the Scenic Area, the stationing of an emergency medical technician at the Hole-in-the-Wall fire station is unwarranted and much too costly. Most Bureau personnel working in the area are highly trained in emergency medicine, CPR, and other emergency procedures. Emergency communications are found near the campgrounds at the Hole-in-the-Wall fire station by use of a radio communication network. Radios are also installed in all vehicles used by BLM personnel on patrol. By use of the campground host program, communication facilities will be available at Mid Hills, when established, during peak visitor periods.

Mine Shafts

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"We do not support the filling or blasting of old mines to "render them harmless"."

Response:

BLM will usually fence or sign mining hazards for visitor safety. Blasting or filling mine shafts is not Bureau policy, since such actions would block these areas off from future exploration or development.

Competitive Events

5 [Harriet Allen]
"Races and large scale events [more than ten vehicles or 25 people (at 2.5 persons per vehicle)] should be no-nos in the EMNSA. Alternate sites are adjacent and easily available from the same highway/freeway/road system."

Response:

Competitive and/or commercial events where speed is the major factor will be prohibited in the East Mojave National Scenic Area. The only exception will be the Clark Mountain segment of the Barstow to Vegas race course.

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87 [Thomas and Beatrice Ferguson]
"We hope that the Barstow-Vegas race will be rerouted so as not to encroach on the EMNSA."

148

Response:

There were five such comments asking for the Barstow-Vegas race to be eliminated from the Scenic Area. It is BLM's intent to reroute the Soda Lake to I-15 portion of the Barstow to Vegas course out of the Scenic Area after the 1987 race. This will be accomplished through the normal environmental assessment process in 1988. The Clark Mountain segment, being on well established roads through terrain that does not encourage straying, will remain available for this yearly event.

58 [Jayne Chavez-Scales, California Turtle & Tortoise Club]
"Require promoters to put up a bond to cover the cost of reseeding or damage to vegetation. Impose heavy fines on racers who stray from the course of the race. Also impose heavy fines ($500-$1,000) for each mortality of wildlife (tortoise, fox, etc.). The cost of the studies should be the responsibility of the promoters of the race. Promoters should pay for the cost of additional rangers, CHP, or other law enforcement officers, to supervise the race course on the California and Nevada sides. Helicopters should also be used to control the race. All costs should be provided by the promoters/racers."

Response:

The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA), sponsor of the Barstow-Vegas race, does indeed finance all race-related monitoring by BLM personnel, CHP and others. Helicopter use is presently provided during the race for control purposes and also funded by AMA. Most BLM involvement prior, during and after the event is funded by AMA. A $5,000 performance bond is posted with BLM prior to every Barstow-Vegas event.

D. Visual Resource Management

General Comments

175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"This description [of Visual Resource Management classes] is difficult to understand. [We] would like to see some additional explanation in the final [plan]."

Response:

Additional descriptive material has been added to Appendix F.

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8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"The visual standards should be applied to the entire East Mojave National Scenic Area, not just to corridors along the major routes. Cima Dome is not a CORRIDOR. The Kelso DUNES are not a CORRIDOR. The vistas portrayed in this plan extend well beyond any one mile corridor.

It is not clear what is meant by "cost-effective." To whom? Who pays for rehabilitating a mining road after the mine closes? The most cost effective method is to carefully determine all necessary reclamation and to require 100% performance bonds on the rehabilitation for all approved actions by miners or others.

A neglected tool is camouflage paint. We can think of several structures which would benefit by a spotty application of desert shades of paint. While it may not be possible to put a tailings pile back in the hole, it is possible to reduce their visual impact and encourage revegetation by distributing soils over the tailings."

Response:

VRM Class I standards will be applied not only to the scenic corridors, but also all designated wilderness areas and New York Mountain, Clark Mountain and Piute Creek Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

Reclamation costs for mining operations are paid for by the claimant or operator. BLM requires performance bonds for most operations in the East Mojave, with amount of the bond being the estimated costs to BLM if the agency must bear reclamation costs.

The use of proper coloration is an extremely effective visual mitigation tool employed by BLM for several years. Also included in many reclamation plans are requirements to stockpile soil for use after a project is complete. The soil is essential for revegetation of an area, and for mitigation of color contrasts.

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5 [Harriet Allen]
"This is one of the Plan's most important sections/issues. But it gets little

attention. The Recreation Management Plan which supports a new network of roads and trails appears to have priority over scenic values.
Litter and broken bottles, cans, etc. are not factored into the section. Races and motorized events and even large equestrian and people activities must be factored into this section."

Response:

BLM's normal maintenance program handles trash pick up at the campgrounds and selected recreation sites. Volunteer groups have made a substantial contribution as well, particularly in special projects along the Mojave Road, at Soda Springs, and on Cima Dome. Most BLM employees in the field will stop and clear up sites in areas where they are working. BLM will continue to encourage visitors to take away their trash in informational material prepared for their use.

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161 [Steve Kuehl, Phantom Duck Club]
"We will also point out that vehicle tracks are indications and evidence of presence of humans - a valid portion of the naturally occurring fauna in the EMNSA. Virtually all desert uses impact the visual resource, including hiking trails. "Vehicle tracks" are unreasonably discriminated against in this plan, as an undesirable human artifact."

Response: Comment noted.

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273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"BLM, on page 79, notes that when analyzing requests for local services crossing public lands, visual resource management objectives will be followed. However, "costs and other resource impacts will also be considered." This is a big, fat loophole. I've seen economic and resource arguments convoluted enough to satisfy a medieval theologian. Visual resource management objectives alone should govern such decisions. It is not BLM's duty to save developers money by considering their costs. It is BLM's duty to properly manage public lands."

Response:

Private land owners have a legal right to develop their property within reasonable parameters established by local government. Costs, along with resource concerns, must be evaluated and options presented to the owner to avoid "taking without compensation."

D-1 Visual Resource Management Guidelines

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"Visual Resource Management Class 1 guidelines should be extended to proposed or designated National Natural Landmarks. What is the point of National Natural Landmark designation if it does not protect the resource in question? Whether designated Wilderness by Congress or not, both Cima Dome and Cinder Cones should be preserved as intact as possible, so that future generations may also enjoy their scenic specialness."

85 [Donald Falk, Desert Survivors]
"The proposed VRM scheme leaves Wilderness Study Areas in Class II until Congress designates them as wilderness. This is inappropriate.

WSAs should be in Class I unless released from further wilderness consideration."

184 [Bernie & Carol Mauldin, CA Federation of Mineralogical Societies]
"Visual Resource Control Rating. Suggest each item or part of an item be individually assessed and rated on its own importance as class 1, 2, 3, or 4."

Response:

BLM's "Interim Management Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review" do not allow actions which would impair wilderness suitability. Visual quality is one of the factors used to evaluate an action's potential for impairment.

The National Natural Landmarks BLM administers were not necessarily set aside for their scenic quality resources. The Cinder Cones Landmark, for example, was designated in recognition of the geologic structures found in the region. Class II guidelines will adequately protect the landscape character of the area.

The proposal to manage visual resources according to class I or II guidelines only is intended to limit large-scale developments in the Scenic Area, and upgrade visual resource management for the seldom seen "backcountry" areas which provide much of the character of the region. Management for class III or IV objectives would not allow the maintenance of the region's existing character.

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11 [Orlo Anderson, Kaiser Steel]
"We have another concern regarding the imposition of visual quality objectives upon any area of planned disturbance. The BLM's goal of applying a Class II visual quality objective, where "management activities may be seen but should not attract the attention of the casual observer", seems so stringent as to preclude almost any open pit mining opportunities. The Vulcan site has already experienced considerable disturbance. Although partially hidden from view in the canyon leading to Foshay Pass, anyone traveling the Vulcan mine road would have difficulty missing the pit walls and dumps associated with the operation.

Considering the disturbance inherent in multiple bench, open pit development, we feel that the blanket application of the Class II VRM is far too stringent and feel that sufficient discretion in the management goals should exist for the application of a Class III VRM where specific situations indicate its application, such as at the Vulcan."

Response:

Non-discretionary actions such as mineral development (which by law BLM must allow) will not be required to meet VRM class I or II objectives, although reasonable efforts to do so will be attempted, particularly for small-scale operations such as exploratory drilling. Large-scale projects may be modified to reduce levels of visual contrast, but BLM acknowledges that such projects will not be able to meet class I or II objectives.

149 [Edward Karapetian, Los Angeles Department of Water & Power]
"The DWP believes that the Plan's Visual Resource Management (VRM) Guidelines for the East Mojave National Scenic Area may conflict with utility corridors as transmission lines, by their nature, have visual impacts. These impacts may contradict the Plan's objectives concerning preservation of visual resources within utility corridors.

We perceive a conflict between the proposed VRM goals and their implementation within designated utility corridors, particularly within the recently enlarged Clark Mountain Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). It should also be noted that use of VRM Class I Guidelines, within the Clark mountain ACEC, and use of VRM Class II Guidelines elsewhere in East Mojave are unattainable when applied to areas overlapping preexisting designated utility corridors...

The Plan states that "if these standards (the VRM Class I and II Guidelines) cannot be met, the project will be located elsewhere..." (Plan, page 79, paragraph 1). Unfortunately, it is neither practical nor feasible to relocate transmission lines."

194 [D.L. Miller, Southern California Edison Company]
"Edison..., perceives a potential conflict between the Plan's Visual Resource Management (VRM) guidelines for the EMNSA and preservation of the corridor planning process. The Plan (page 79) states that if the VRM guidelines cannot be met, the project will be located elsewhere. Since relocation of a transmission project is often neither practical nor feasible, Edison would request that this language be modified for lines to be located within designated corridors to only require relocation within the corridor. This modification preserves two of the most important advantages of the corridor planning process: elimination of the risks and costs associated with consideration of routing alternatives outside the corridor and facilitation of a timely and efficient agency review process which benefits both the agency and the applicant."

Response:

VRM guidelines will not have an effect on development in established utility corridors. If planned actions concerning relocation of corridors are approved, the only developable corridor in the East Mojave will be along I-15 east of Cima Road. The Final Plan contains a clarification concerning the relationship between utility corridors and VRM guidelines.

D-2 Visual Simulations

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"Visual simulations should be required for all projects in the East Mojave National Scenic Area. Certainly, some of the roads cut into the western-most cinder cones cover less than 5 acres, yet their visual impact on the Cones is

most dramatic. Other projects like microwaves, pumping stations, and storage facilities, can be equally degrading to the visual resources of the area."

Response:

The planned action would require visual simulations in areas of high visual sensitivity, which would include projects such as construction of microwave towers or large-scale structures which could be seen from several vantage points in the East Mojave. Many projects are so small in scale that preparation of a visual simulation would serve no useful purpose.

D-3 Reduce Visual Contrasts of Existing Structures

175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"Scenic Corridors are important for trails as well as county or BLM maintained roads. The VRM classes are hard to understand, however, MRAN feels compelled to comment on what we think VRM classification implies. There are structures such as corrals made of railroad ties, tailings from early mining activities, wind driven water pumps and wildlife guzzlers that add to the viewshed. MRAN hopes that the BLM maintains sufficient flexibility to allow new structures that while appropriate may not repeat form, line, color, or texture."

133 [Robin Ives]
"The decisions in this area should be made through a committee. We feel that if it is left to one person to make this decision, the real possibility of a mistake, is possible. Furthermore, what is the criteria used for these decisions?"

48 [Lisa Cagnolatti, Southern California Gas Company]
"How does this section affect already-existing facilities? What type of "action" would be dictated and what recourse does the operator have?"

258 [Mary Rosczyk]
"We strongly support the philosophy and management direction of this section. We do not agree with the management of tearing down current structures, without a review of those that visit the area. When in doubt, consult with the users."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"We are not in support of tearing down structures on public lands just to improve the scenic quality. We would like to see a forum where the advisory committee or some ad-hoc committee with our representation is consulted before the BLM tears down anything. (We are worried that this activity may already be starting.)"

Response:

This action is not intended to eliminate structures or uses associated with them. A review of structures on public lands will be made in cooperation with their owners to determine if a change in color, reduction in height, or construction of a screen or fence or other low cost measures can be taken to reduce contrasts. BLM would encourage owners of structures to implement these proposals during normally scheduled maintenance - there would be no additional cost to paint a building a less contrasting color, for example.

D-4 Establish Scenic Corridors
D-5 Limit Signs to Administrative Needs

48 [Lisa Cagnolatti, Southern California Gas Company]
"SoCalGas has a major surface structure that would fall within this one-mile-wide scenic corridor. Will the proposal take into consideration grandfathering of existing facilities?"

131 [Elden Hughes, Sierra Club-Angeles Chapter]
"We approve the conversion of all multiple-use Class M areas to Class L. You need greater control. We could just wish that you would expand the concept of "Scenic Corridor" to "Scenic Area.""

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"There is no need for scenic corridors. The entire million acres is to be managed for scenic values according to the Secretarial Order. Very few of the scenes portrayed with the plan would be protected with a one-mile-wide corridor. More important is negotiating with the county for a sign ordinance to keep obnoxious signs off private land in the East Mojave. What is the continued funding for? It is inadequate to actually do anything.

Since D-4 refers to private land, can we assume D-5 applies to Federal land? Does this refer to a new county ordinance or cancelling billboard leases? Funding is inadequate."

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"D-3 through D-5 These are all excellent actions that will help preserve the scenic qualities of the East Mojave. However, what will happen to current signs along scenic corridors or interstates? Will they come down? I certainly hope so."

Response:

Existing structures would be "grandfathered," but measures may be requested to reduce visual contrasts as proposed by D-3.

Action D-4 applies equally to federal and private lands. It should be thought of in conjunction with the strict management guidelines proposed by D-1. Since there certainly will be additional structures built in the East Mojave over the next several years, BLM is identifying in this plan measures which will direct their placement in areas where the visual contrasts can best be tolerated. Much of the East Mojave will indeed be managed along the same guidelines as for scenic corridors.

Existing signs will be handled by implementation of D-3. Signs on public land will be reviewed for need, and steps taken to phase them out if no need is served. Necessary signs may be redesigned when normal maintenance is scheduled.

D-6 Do Not Allow Wind Energy Development

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"As far as it goes, non-allowance of wind energy development in EMNSA and Mountain Pass is an excellent provision. However, no new projects for domestic or range use should be allowed. Again, the Area's basic philosophy needs questioning: is the area to be managed for Scenic considerations, or is it just another cow pasture - and a poor one at that."

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"We agree that no wind energy development should be allowed, but in addition, encourage use of solar panels for local needs to reduce the number of electrical lines and noisy generators needed for domestic or local consumption."

Response:

BLM is obligated by existing agreements or law to allow use of windmills for domestic/range use. Visual contrast issues can be resolved by appropriate location and design of these structures. Alternate energy sources such as solar panels may be feasible in this area, and would be required to meet the same standards limiting visual contrasts.

E. Wilderness

Most comments on wilderness issues referred to Desert Plan recommendations on the suitability/non-suitability of Wilderness Study Areas for designation, and expressed concern that the areas were being too restrictively managed under interim guidelines, or not being provided sufficient protection from potentially impairing uses.

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117 [Christopher Haynes]
"I urge you to consider wilderness designation for all WSAs in the East Mojave National Scenic Area. This is the only way the integrity of these areas (which is only 50% of the East Mojave National Scenic Area) can be protected from abuses by ORVs, mineral exploitation, and overgrazing by domestic livestock. By designating WSAs as Multiple or Limited Use areas, the WSA slowly becomes fragmented by a few land abusers. Over time, the area in question loses its natural character that the BLM seeks to protect.

While the management plan covers the various means of enforcement on non-wilderness uses, in this day of tight budgets and the vastness of the area, I do not believe that enforcement of non-wilderness uses can be adequately addressed. This has certainly been proven to me in viewing many other multiple use areas throughout the California desert.

The number of roads that currently bisect the many WSAs ensure adequate access to these areas, and by designating the WSAs as wilderness, there is no question or ambiguity as to the use of that area by visitors or those charged with enforcing the guidelines that will be put in place."

85 [Donald Falk, Desert Survivors]
"All Wilderness Study Areas in the EMNSA should be recommended for wilderness designation."

163 [Lawrence LaPre, Audubon Society-San Bernardino Valley]
"Wilderness Areas 270 and 271 qualify for recommended status, in our view. We support the burro herd management target of 0 animals in this area."

138 [Bruce Jensen]
"It is my suggestion that you recommend the entire expanse of 700,000 plus acres be allocated wilderness ... If the scenic protection of these areas is your goal, what could possibly be better than wilderness designation?"

Response:

It is not within the scope of the Scenic Area plan to change WSA boundaries or make recommendations for changes in suitability recommendations. The Bureau has made its recommendations through the Desert Plan. Only Congress can designate or release an area from wilderness study. Until Congress makes these determinations, all WSAs are managed according to the laws and guidelines set forth in FLPMA and the Bureau's Interim Management Policy (IMP). The intent of Section 603(c) of FLPMA is to manage all lands under wilderness study in a nonimpairing manner until such time as Congress either designates or releases the area from wilderness consideration. FLPMA is further supplemented by the

Bureau's IMP guidelines requiring that surface disturbing activities proposed in WSAs meet the nonimpairment criteria cited in the IMP (Chapter 2 B-3) prior to possible authorization. To ensure that the Secretary's decision on the Bureau's recommendations will not be constrained, all reclamation must be completed prior to the wilderness study reports being forwarded to the Secretary.

The suitability recommendations for wilderness were considered from a desert wide perspective choosing a representative sample of unique ecosystems throughout the entire CDCA that would add to the diversity of those wilderness areas already represented within the National Wilderness Preservation System. The seven suitably recommended WSAs within the scenic area are an excellent example of diversity of ecosystems, not only within the Scenic Area but throughout the entire CDCA. The Bureau recommended the remaining 23 areas within the Scenic Area as nonsuitable due in part that the type of ecosystem represented in many of these areas is already present in the National Wilderness Preservation system and the fact that other multiple resource concerns outweighed their value as wilderness.

An amendment to change the recommendation of the Woods/Hackberry Mountains CDCA-WSA #271 was made and rejected in the 1982 amendments to the California Desert Plan. The Record of Decision found the "limited" multiple use class guidelines sufficient for the protection of the area's wildland values but notes that special management of the area's cultural resources is necessary. The Scenic Area plan proposes further protection to cultural resources by increased ranger presence and an expansion of the area withdrawn from mineral entry.

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273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"E-1 and E-2 are needed actions. In the meantime, the Bureau could do much to end unnecessary degradation of the Wilderness Study Areas in EMNSA by closing all designated routes of travel into these Areas.

The Bureau could also acknowledge that "mistakes were made" and indicate to Congress that additional areas should be designated as suitable for Wilderness status."

128 [Vicky Hoover, Sierra Club-San Francisco Bay Chapter]
"We urge that all WSA's within the EMNSA be protected from ANY encroachment upon their pristine, actual wilderness condition until such future time when Congress can designate them as wilderness. We recognize that none of these WSA's is extremely large, by wilderness standards elsewhere, and that access to them is readily provided merely by use of current road corridors."

160 [Steve Kuehl, CORVA]
"We are strongly opposed to the Wilderness designations for Kelso Dunes, Cinder Cones, New York Mountains, and the Providence Mountains. A "Backcountry" approach would only be acceptable. Allow access for all to enjoy, not closure except for a few."

175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"The fact that most of the Wilderness Study Areas have vehicle routes is

confusing to us. MRAN realizes that an occasional unmaintained way may be allowed to continue in a WSA and that WSA's should be managed at their traditional level of use. MRAN questions the appropriateness of the wilderness designation where most include vehicle routes. The protection of natural resources can be accomplished through methods other than wilderness designation. MRAN would hope that these recommendations were made in accordance with values of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude or for primitive and unconfined recreation, and unique ecological, geological, or other features of scenic, historic, scientific, or education value. Wilderness for any other reason is not good land management.

MRAN questions why WSA lands not designated by Congress automatically return to "limited use." While MRAN acknowledges that this is generally the case, there exist lands that are best managed under the "moderate" classification. There should be public review to determine if any of those lands are within the East Mojave National Scenic Area."

Response:

The Bureau's Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP) clearly allows for the recreational use of off-road vehicles on existing ways and trails so long as the impacts do not impair the area's wilderness suitability. The IMP further states that "no lands will be designated as "closed" solely because they are under wilderness review." To control impacts, BLM may designate the area as "closed" to the type of vehicles causing the problem. The Bureau also has authority under other programs to regulate ORV use to minimize damage to wildlife and other resource values.

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11 [Orlo Anderson, Kaiser Steel]
"In designating its wilderness study areas, the BLM has encircled the principal uplift areas of the East Mojave placing them off-limits to mineral development; these same areas constitute the primary sites for mineral occurrence. Where known mineral occurrences and mining districts were excluded from wilderness study areas, they were frequently so closely skirted by wilderness study boundaries that future mineral development will either be severely hindered or totally precluded, a case in point being Kaiser's Vulcan property which will be mentioned more fully later in these comments.

We are greatly concerned with the boundary of Wilderness Study Area 263 appearing to be in close proximity to the north wall of the Vulcan pit. The boundary, as drawn on the 15' USGS quadrangle of the immediate area, appears to lie along the northern limit of Kaiser's patented claims. If this is the case, the three unpatented claims ... which constitute the most northerly claims on the property would lie within the WSA and future expansion of mining to the north of the existing pit would be severely hampered, if not impossible. Furthermore, if the WSA boundary lies along the norther limits of the patented claims, and as the ore bodies dip to the north, Kaiser may be denied its extralateral rights in pursuing the ore bodies down dip.

We request the re-siting of the southern boundary of the portion of WSA 263 recommended for wilderness designation to more northerly limits thereby providing Kaiser with a buffer between the area subject to development and the wilderness designation."

Response:

The WSA boundary and the boundary that is suitably recommended for wilderness designation differ in the area north of the patented Vulcan mine claims. The patented Vulcan Mine claims are excluded from the boundary of the WSA. Portions of the unpatented claims blocks (#s 11, 12, 14, 22, 23) are within the area recommended for wilderness designation. The suitably recommended boundary is drawn north of the patented Vulcan mining claims traversing an east-west line effectively splitting Section 25, T. 10 N., R. 13 E., in half while the WSA boundary is synonymous with the northern rim of the patented Vulcan mining claims.

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48 [Lisa Cagnolatti, Southern California Gas Company]
"In the maintenance of our existing natural gas pipelines, it is necessary to disturb the surface. It seems incongruous that every time we do work on our natural gas pipelines, the activities must be reviewed for compliance as established by the Interim Management policy (see Appendix I).

Response:

Interim Management Guidelines apply only to wilderness study areas. Roads and utility lines which form boundaries for these areas are affected only if work would encroach into the WSA.

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38 [F.E. & Vivian Brant]
"We object to being told we cannot go to or visit our public lands. In the first place, a small percentage of the people would violate the rules deliberately, and the rest of us would be mentally frustrated. We believe that good informative posting with proper or necessary enforcement would preclude the need for formal wilderness area."

Response: Comment noted.

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8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"Because we support wilderness designation for more than 50% of the East Mojave National Scenic Area, we looked forward to the descriptions of wilderness management for the area. Imagine our disappointment when we viewed the reiteration of BLM interim guidelines -- guidelines which have led us to challenge many permitted actions in WSAs in the past and continue to do so today. We started over and propose this set to give a sense of what a better scheme for managing wilderness might include.

E-0 Revise wilderness recommendations to recommend all WSAs in the Scenic Area for Wilderness. (See previous comments on wilderness.)

E-00 Begin administering all recommended wilderness areas as wilderness now.

E-1 Provide public information by:
(a) including WSA and recommended WSA boundaries on all District issued recreation maps,
(b) including information on the recreation maps about regulations as they apply to wilderness areas,
(c) providing the maps described in current management at all BLM offices, and provide information on WSA's (boundaries and management) on the "Resource Area Guide" maps.

E-2 (a) Establish self issuing registration forms for use by those visiting WSAs, and make them available at all information centers. The forms would contain necessary information on use of the area with respect to vegetation, fires, etc. Such a form should also include a space for visitors to note any problems they observe in the WSAs. This would begin to give BLM a more accurate survey of use levels, popularity of routes and sites and other data essential to proper management.
(b) Establish back country patrols, as well as drive-by patrols of WSA boundaries.
(c) Monitor closely areas such as Woods and Hackberry Mountains where areas are being stripped of cactus.
(d) Solicit input and volunteers in planning and executing clean-up efforts inside WSAs.

The Desert Plan calls for monthly surveillance, so the statement to increase patrols should be revised to indicate an intention to resume monthly aerial surveillance or to return to monthly surveillance. Funding would hardly cover monthly aerial surveys. The funding for E-1 and E-2 would provide for five signs per year, period.

E-3 Modify all route designations to close all routes inside WSAs.

E-4 All areas not designated as Wilderness by Congress will be managed under class L guidelines.

The specific direction seems necessary because the Desert Plan was amended to leave all WSAs not designated wilderness in limbo.

E-5 Complete reclamation in all WSAs. Provide funding for reclamation of unauthorized activities where the person responsible cannot be identified.

The information on page 80 regarding reclamation is not consistent. In paragraph 3, it says "the only unauthorized uses ... have been successfully reclaimed ..." In paragraph 5 it says that BLM " is in the process of commenting all areas where reclamation is required but the responsible party is unknown." Which is it? Done or not?

This management plan contains no guidance on the preparation of Wilderness Management Plans (page 81, par. 5), following designation by Congress. Will wilderness management within a National Scenic Area be different than wilderness management outside the EMNSA? The plan is silent. How will management of adjacent areas be handled so that the effect on Wilderness is minimized? The trail systems being proposed mention hiking, equestrian and bicycle use. Bicycles are mechanical and not appropriate in Wilderness Areas.

How will the trail system respond to this legal requirement? Is BLM considering how it will maintain guzzlers in WSAs using the minimum essential tools?

The most obvious point of this discussion is that while detailed considerations have been given to exactly which parcels of land to acquire, and exactly which routes will be closed, very little consideration was given in this plan to wilderness management. The overriding principle should be that only wilderness dependent activities should be favored in wilderness and wilderness study areas."

Response:

E-0: See response to comments 117, 85, 163, 138 at the beginning of this section.

E-00: Existing laws and policies do not allow BLM to manage non-designated areas as wilderness. A number of WSAs nevertheless are "defacto" wilderness due to law levels of human use. Interim Management Guidelines provide adequate levels of protection.

E-1, E-2: Currently, the Desert Access guides provide minimal information on regulations as they apply to WSAs. The suggestions provided (addition of regulations, boundaries, and general descriptions, self-registration/information forms) for those WSAs within the Scenic Area will be implemented during the next revision of the Desert Access guides.

Other actions recommended (E-2 b, c, d) are already being carried out by BLM personnel, or are included in actions proposed by the Scenic Area Plan, such as clean-up of areas (see D-3 and L-3).

E-3: See response to comments 273, 128, 160, 175.

E-4: The final Plan calls for class C or L management of the entire Scenic Area.

E-5: Funding for reclamation work in WSAs not covered by performance bonds has been requested by BLM.

BLM's Wilderness Management policy and regulations will apply to designated areas on all public lands, including the East Mojave. That policy does not allow the use of mountain bicycles in designated wilderness areas.

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142 [Frederick Johnson, Inyo Multiple Use Coalition]
"1. Allow continuing non-impairing temporary mining in all WSA's contingent on complete reclamation to being substantially unnoticeable within 60 days after Congress instates the Wilderness. This would more closely follow the intent of F.L.M.A. by allowing congressional decision before negating non-impairing and reclaimable mineral exploration and development on all WSA's whether deemed suitable or not.

2. In the East Mojave, change management policy and regulations using 43CFR 3802.5-0 and 3809.5-0 to read -- "Mining operations will be considered non-impairing if the B.L.M. determines that there will only be temporary impacts that will be reclaimed to the point of being substantially unnoticeable within 60 days after Congress recommends a Wilderness Study Area for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, and the impacts will not degrade wilderness values." If these criteria are met, then the Secretary should have no problem recommending any W.S.A. deemed suitable by the B.L.M.'s experts in the field. This will allow continued study and exploration by responsible concerns contingent on environmental review by the B.L.M.

3. Allow WSAs in the East Mojave which are already recommended unsuitable due to lack of all the needed wilderness criteria to fall under the policy and management criteria of 43 CFR 3809 public lands of Class L use in non-study areas because:

a. No further study by the Department for wilderness or minerals will be done on these lands.

b. To keep these lands in the highly restrictive use classification of Wilderness Study when both wilderness and study have been ruled out is in conflict with the intent of F.L.M.P.A. Sec. 603 (a) and (c). In 603 (a) the Secretary is from time to time to advise the President on suitability and non-suitability. If non-suitable areas have not been so reported, they should be reported to the President immediately. In Sec. 603 (c) the Wilderness Study Areas are to be managed during the period of review "so as not to impair the suitability for such areas for preservation as wilderness" and this clearly implies that this type of management is only for suitable areas determined by experts of the Department.

c. These lands in the East Mojave Scenic area which are determined not to have complete wilderness values will go back to public lands with multiple use mandated by FLPMA and with the excellent protective guidelines developed under FLPMA to protect special sensitive areas.

d. Mining and other economic operations existing and those deemed necessary after protective environmental review by the BLM could proceed and could help revitalize or maintain local economies in the desert.

4. Before final suitable recommendations for Wilderness instatement in the East Mojave, all mineral studies, inventories and public input should be reviewed and environmental compatibility studied to determine if final Wilderness boundaries should be adjusted to exclude known or high potential mineral resource from the Wilderness to insure wilderness protection in the future. Under FLPMA it is the BLM's job to determine and adjust boundaries according to known and gathered data.

Response:

Points 1, 2 and 3 are outside the scope of this plan.

At this time, the Bureau's reports on the CDCA Wilderness Study Areas are scheduled for submission to the Secretary of Interior in 1989, when mineral studies on the suitably recommended areas will be completed. Any changes in wilderness recommendations would require an amendment to the California Desert Plan and possibly the completion of additional minerals reports. As stated in the Scenic Area plan, a formal change in wilderness recommendations would significantly delay BLM's report to Congress, possibly past the 1991 deadline required by FLPMA.

F. Cultural Resources

138 [Bruce Jensen]
"Among all your thoughts, your ideas for historical preservation seem to be the best within the limits that you have. Historical structures and cultural sites (Native American and Western) ought to be carefully preserved and monitored, and archaeological sites should be viewed on a permit-only basis, or perhaps on a tour."

Response:

Archaeological investigations are currently regulated under a permitting process pursuant to the Archaeological Resource Protection Act and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. Controlling access to casual visitation of all archaeological sites however is precluded by the extent of archaeological resources occurring in the Scenic Area and funding constraints.

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"We strongly favor studies to improve the cultural resources data base and more effective monitoring and protective actions (pages 82-83). Prioritizing of cultural sites is particularly important so that especially significant resources can receive appropriately greater levels of monitoring, documenting of condition trends, and protective management. We also agree that important cultural properties on non public lands should be acquired by donation, exchange, or purchase (and then withdrawn from mineral entry). And we emphatically agree that vehicular access controls (as mentioned earlier) are essential for the protection of East Mojave's irreplaceable cultural values."

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"It is not legal to protect only those threatened by vandalism or natural deterioration. The law requires that all cultural and historic resources be protected! The language and intent of this section must be modified to reflect that requirement."

Response:

All archaeological sites are protected by law and/or regulation, notably in accordance with the Archaeological Resource Protection Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations 8365. Management actions F-1 through F-3 augment and emphasize current practice. In consideration of the vast extent of archaeological sites occurring within the East Mojave and finite funding, prioritization in terms of study, monitoring frequency, and protection/mitigation is necessary.

160 [Steve Kuehl, CORVA]
"We cannot accept ... stopping the public [from] enjoyment of these areas. A better approach might be to do the intensive inventory of these sites, learn what we can from them, and return them to the public to enjoy and learn. Closing them will only further the ill will the public has on this subject now."

— [form letter from five commenters]
"We need to preserve the valuable archaeological sites and there should be no motor vehicles allowed in or near the sites. There should be no mining or camping also. We do need ranger protection in the areas."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"We feel that a focus should be placed on the arch sites where the access is an immediate problem. These sites should receive intensive study now, and then be allowed to have continued public use. We don't want to lose too much of the data that can come from a site, but the continued practice of the BLM and other agencies is to lock up areas and never reopen them to use, study or no study. We also realize that some arch folks feel the vast majority of the EMNSA should be locked down for their use, but this is not our idea of multiple use."

37 [Laura Brady]
"Certainly archaeological sites should be protected through road closings. More personalized interpretive services could help the public to become more appreciative of why such areas need protection (such as the rangers do at Zzyzx),"

Response:
With respect to the vast number of cultural properties occurring in the East Mojave, universal application of access denial is impractical and unwarranted. However, BLM is obligated by law to protect these properties. Precluding access through measures such as route closure, fencing, mineral withdrawal and wilderness designation is a viable means of protection employed on a case-by-case basis. Specific route closures are prescribed as the most appropriate means of decreasing depredation resulting from vehicle and camping use. While data recovery is a means of mitigation, it is very costly, both in funding and to the non-renewable resource. Its application is therefore effected discriminately.

The effects of mining and camping upon cultural resources are addressed under different statutes. While proposed mining actions are subject to environmental review, including Sec. 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, an approval in accordance with the General Mining Act of 1872, is not discretionary (ie., it must be approved by BLM). As with all proposed surface disturbances, complete avoidance is the preferred alternative. Where such avoidance is not feasible, Sec. 106 is invoked whereby professionally acceptable mitigation of adverse effects is implemented. Alternatively, location of developed camping areas is discretionary and is not planned in proximity of cultural properties. Where concentrations of casual use camping are identified through monitoring efforts which impact those properties, protection measures are implemented.

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133 [Robin Ives]
"I support the protection of our archaeological heritage in the EMNSA by protecting the remote sites with wilderness classification and by stationing rangers at interpretive centers at the more important accessible sites. Every effort must be made to preserve the pictographs from further vandalism."

131 [Elden Hughes, Sierra Club-Angeles Chapter]
"We support the funding of studies and protection of cultural resources. The best protection of our most valuable archaeological sites is remoteness from vehicular access. This is done by wilderness designations. There should be wilderness designations specifically for this purpose."

Response:

Special features, including cultural resources, are identified by Congress as a prime reason for wilderness designation. Management of cultural resources is specified for lands under wilderness review as well as for designated wilderness. Thousands of cultural properties are situated within lands currently subject to wilderness study in the East Mojave.

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79 [Anne Duffield, East Mojave Rock Art Recording Project]
"The members of East Mojave Rock Art Recording Project (EMRARP) strongly support three basic concepts for the management of rock art sites in the East Mojave ...:
1. All rock art should be monitored and protected with protective measures matched to the degree of endangerment. Rock art is inherently fragile and easily destroyed, accidentally or otherwise. Destruction of rock art should be prevented at all costs.
2. Education should be given the highest priority in managing cultural resources because public education is the best means for preserving them and preventing their destruction.
3. Access to rock art sites should not be denied to the interested public, as this cultural resource belongs to all citizens as part of our common human heritage."

Response:

BLM concurs with the statement that rock art should be monitored and protected, has established a regular patrol schedule for such sites, and completed some signing/fencing actions. Public education regarding cultural resource concerns is discussed in more detail under actions C-6 and C-7 (interpretation) and will receive a high priority in the development of an interpretive program. BLM has and will continue to selectively close access if such use is causing or is highly likely to lead to impacts.

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135 [Lynn Jacobs]
"Archaeological studies should be severely limited, as the studies themselves are oftentimes environmentally destructive and/or detrimental to the cultural resources which are being studied."

Response:

Archaeological studies prescribed in Action F-1 are of limited scope and extent. Resources identified for investigation are selected in terms of obtaining a representative sample of site types. Similarly, significance testing is restricted to acquiring a representative sample of site values. Conversely, mitigative data recovery is a compensative action prescribed in no alternative contexts where information would otherwise be lost to adverse effects.

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260 [Harold Sanders]
"Regarding Indian sites and petroglyphs, I think the best way of protecting them is to put up many large signs telling the laws and penalties re. disturbing them. Any other way, you are only attracting attention to them."

Response:

Signs asserting both values and protection of resources occurring in the East Mojave are prescribed for installation in areas of high visitation and/or sensitivity.

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252 [Robert Reynolds, San Bernardino County Museum]
"With the exception of the Dinosaur Trackway ACEC, paleontologic resources are not addressed in general policy statements of the East Mojave Management Plan. Cultural and archaeological studies and surveys are addressed: inclusion of paleontologic surveys in areas not previously studied would assist in future planning and serve to protect known and us - yet undetermined nonrenewable paleontologic resource areas from direct and indirect adverse impacts through multiple land use. Objectives for paleontologic resources could be similar to those expressed at the bottom of page 23 ... We know that the California Desert District Office has been and continues to be very active in management of nonrenewable paleontologic resources in the CDCA as a whole, and we suggest that this policy would be appropriately reflected in the East Mojave Plan."

Response:

Paleontological concerns were not raised as a major issue requiring resolution during the course of public and BLM scoping, and therefore not categorically identified in the plan. However, paleontological resources are given full consideration in the environmental review and planning processes, in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the Desert Plan. Comprehensive guidelines for paleontological resources are followed which provide management and protection procedures.

G. Native American Concerns

135 [Lynn Jacobs]
"Native American use of the area should be consistent with objectives outlined above and below. Native American ancestry should not be used to justify practices which would result in significant environmental alterations or degradation."

Response:

Specific Native American practices are justified in accordance with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (refer to glossary). Environmental impacts suggested are neither requested by Native American groups nor considered by BLM.

H. Air, Soils, Water

General Comments

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club - SCRCC]
"(1) At the projected rate of 30,000 acres per year for soil studies it will take 42 years to complete the studies on the 1,255,343 acres of EMNSA land in grazing allotments. A priority list for study is needed. Saying that grazing may be better in the East Mojave than elsewhere in the California desert really isn't saying much.

(2) There are other air quality issues to be considered besides particulates and fugitive dust, for example, air quality impacts of all the mining the plan proposes to encourage everywhere possible.

(3) We commend BLM's aggressive program of water rights filings for wildlife. How many such filings apply to EMNSA springs? How many more are needed or anticipated? we also commend BLM for its program of eliminating burros from the EMNSA, a measure which will increase water for wildlife.

(4) We recommend a policy of carefully monitoring springs and seeps when groundwater is tapped for mineral or agricultural developments both inside and outside the Scenic Area.

(5) We also recommend a policy to protect water from contamination by mining operations. In particular we are concerned about processes which may use cyanide leaching or foul waters with drill mud.

(6) We would add one additional concern not included in the plan. Noise pollution. While in cities decibels are counted to avoid damage to hearing, disturbing sleep and rattling buildings, noise pollution in the EMNSA could destroy one of its most famous resources, SILENCE. Provision needs to be made for screening and buffering sounds from pumping stations along pipeline corridors, motors at microwave relay stations, etc. The plan should address noise pollution."

Response:

(1) Approximately 10% of the East Mojave is not within grazing allotments, and at least a similar amount is not accessible to livestock, thus eliminating those acres from the total. However, even with the above acres eliminated, it would still take 30-plus years to complete the survey. Therefore, a priority system will be established to concentrate on the more sensitive areas. Depending on both the availability of funding and the eventual cost/acre, the time-frame for completion of the survey could be speeded up considerably.

(2) The Scenic Area plan does not necessarily encourage mining but it does recognize that mining is a legitimate use of the public lands, and as such, must be accommodated within the legal and regulatory framework within which BLM operates. Along with increased particulates and fugitive dust, mining operations result in increased vehicular emissions. Air quality impacts from more mining operations which include on-site processing plants are analyzed in site-specific environmental analysis documents and mitigated, if necessary.

(3) The number of water rights filings for wildlife in the East Mojave has not been broken out of the total number of filings. It is BLM's intention to eventually file on every water on public lands in the Scenic Area.

(4) Comment noted. This policy has already been adopted where potential impacts to water sources have been identified.

(5) All mineral processing actions on public lands require an operating permit from the appropriate State of California Regional Water Quality Control Board. The appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board analyzes the proposed action and imposes both protective stipulations and a reclamation bond which names BLM as a co-beneficiary.

(6) Noise abatement measures will be imposed on a case-by-case basis for actions such as those noted in the comment. Unfortunately, some noise pollution is unavoidable (interstate highway traffic and air traffic), and other noise pollution arises from the disrespect and insensitivity of a few visitors to the East Mojave (motorized vehicles without mufflers, loud stereos in campgrounds, etc.).

Air

254 [Elizabeth Ridgely]
"The EPA rating is ridiculous. It allows for more pollution. Barstow is a good place to monitor the effects of Los Angeles, but not the East Mojave."

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"H-1 only deals with soil studies. A positive commitment to retaining good air quality might include a refusal to countenance projects that would damage the Area's air quality."

150 [Pat Keeling]
"Establish a monitor station for air pollution at the Mid Hill Campground for accurate reading for the A.P.C.D. to confirm Class II Air readings. Change budget figures from FY 1991 to 88-89."

Response:

BLM intends to make a positive commitment to air quality by requesting funds to locate an air quality monitoring station somewhere in the Hole-in-the-Wall/Mid Hills area. (See action H-2 in Final Plan).

Soils

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"We support soils surveys toward enhancing both range management and mining reclamation. In situations where livestock grazing is shown to cause harmful impacts upon ecosystems, actions should be taken to remedy those impacts."

Response: Comment noted.

171

99 [Yitzhak Gilon]
"I see nowhere in the draft an account of accurate and updated observation of soil stability and changes in plant cover. I see only in H-1 (page 85) a proposed order three soil survey."

Response:

Information on soil stability and erosion potential was initially gathered in 1978 during preparation of the East Mojave Unit Resource Analysis. This information will be updated upon completion of the soil survey. Changes in plant cover resulting from grazing are monitored on an annual basis as a part of the range management program.

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254 [Elizabeth Ridgely]
"The "best" vegetation patterns are not necessarily the same thing as "potential" vegetation patterns as described in H-1. Neither of these are necessarily what you might want to manage for."

225 [Jeffrey Opkepke, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service]
"Proposal H-1 would seek to "determine potential vegetation" on grazing allotments. This statement implies an intention to alter the native flora to provide better cattle forage. The Service believes that the Scenic Area should be managed in a manner which will result in promoting a natural diversity of native plant species."

Response:

Potential vegetation, as determined by the range site descriptions resulting from the soil survey, serves as a baseline against which to measure current conditions and to develop reasonable, attainable goals in the range management and surface protection programs. It does not make value judgments as to what is the "best" vegetation, it merely states what vegetation should be there based on soils, climate, and comparisons with "relict" areas. It also does not imply any intention to alter native flora to provide better cattle forage but may, in fact, indicate that reductions in grazing are warranted to maintain natural diversity.

Water

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"All waters to which the Bureau retains rights should be withdrawn from mineral law and mineral leasing, not just those needed for wildlife. Local plants, on which the wildlife relies, also require access to these waters."

5 [Harriet Allen]
"Do not permit mining activities to divert water from wildlife or habitat. Do not permit mining of fossil water without full public hearing.
Limit amounts in campgrounds and for recreational purposes such as swimming pools, fountains, etc.
Install and enforce conservation measures in all water-related actions.
Do not permit people/vehicles to access water areas designated for wildlife except to install or maintain."

291 [M.F Swedelius, Desert Protection Council]
"Since water will be an increasing scarce commodity in all of the western states, I strongly urge recycling of water for all mining operations. Water resources should not be diverted to mining without conservation plans. [There is a] need for adequate protection against cyanide and byproducts."

82 [Marion Ely III]
"Critical water resources are those that support wildlife populations. These are seeps and springs in and around the mountain ranges of the east Mojave. Although some of these have historically supported some early mining operations, e.g. Hart, except for a very small operation, modern mining operations utilize ground water supplies. Ground waters are generally hundreds of feet below the surface and are in valleys between the mountain ranges. These waters collect in the subsurface after leaving springs, seeps and ephemeral streams. The resulting ground water in storage is enormous within EMNSA. Very large or hundreds of smaller operations would be required to exist for very long times before they could come anywhere near exhausting these supplies. In any case these resources are beyond capture by the flora and fauna. Conversely, the development of water resources by mining companies actually enhances wildlife, e.g. the Colosseum Mine. In some cases the open pits created generate new habitat centered around the capture of precipitation and the creation of a new water source, e.g. the Rattlesnake Mine."

Response:

Withdrawing all springs and seeps from the mining laws and mineral leasing laws requires justification. This justification does not exist given current usage and methodology. All major mining operations in the Scenic Area either use, or will use, ground water to supply their water needs. Any withdrawals would have to be conducted on a case-by-case basis. Major mining operations use water conservation and water recycling practices because it cuts down start-up and operating costs. The Regional Water Quality Control Boards supervise the use of cyanide in mining operations.

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288 [Lee Swanberg]
"All riparian areas in the proposed EMNSA and all springs or water holes in this area are vital to wildlife and must be protected. No camping, target shooting or ATVs should be allowed around these sensitive wildlife areas. Examples are: Cottonwood Springs, Rock Creek, Caruthers Canyon and Fort Piute."

Response:

Many protective measures for riparian areas and around seeps and springs are already in place, and the Plan proposes more.

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128 [Vicky Hoover, Sierra Club-San Francisco Bay Chapter]
"We urge that all precautions be taken to protect water quality in Piute Creek, the unique permanent stream of the area; the riparian area near Fort Piute is delicate and in need of protection. The Castle Mountain project j(which your

draft plan fails to address at all) must not remove essential water from this drainage."

Response:

Based on a study conducted by a geological/hydrological consulting firm, with review and concurrence by BLM's California State Office hydrologist, it was concluded that the Castle Mountain Project will not remove essential water from Piute Creek, and in fact, no impacts to Piute Creek are expected. A monitoring program is already in place and will continue throughout the life of the project. The Castle Mountain Project was not mentioned in the Scenic Area plan because the Plan of Operation had been submitted shortly before the plan was sent to the printer.

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5 [Harriet Allen]
"A minimum of water should be supplied to vehicles. Perhaps a 5 gallon shut off valve, or a coin operated faucet should be installed in vehicle camping areas. Hikers and equestrians should have separate water supplies."

Response: Comments noted.

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27 [Howard Blair]
"I think the BLM had better check the water rights. It belongs to the State of California according to the California Charter."

Response:

No claims to ownership of groundwater are made in "Section H." The only claim is that the surface land owner has priority on the use of the ground water underlying the land.

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227 [Gary & Linda Overson]
"Throughout the whole draft it is apparent that water plays an important part, not only for the wildlife but for recreation. It should be noted however that the majority of water in the Scenic Area is either on land the ranchers own or control for livestock. Thirty minute stops by visitors at our livestock waters are not acceptable to us at all and is something we will strongly protest against. In order for this draft to work, all affected parties are going to have to work together, but this is a very touchy spot for us. We could suggest that all visitors be advised to bring adequate water for their stay or to get their water from the two campgrounds maintained by the BLM. Another suggestion is that water be made available at the proposed information sites. That wildlife benefits from the rancher's water system is accepted because it usually doesn't interfere with the cattle, but people are a different story. We don't want the water tested to see if it is safe to drink because it is our water for our cattle and most of it has been since the ranches were established in this area."

174

Response:

Water's importance in the desert cannot be overemphasized, and it is this importance that makes water an issue in the Scenic Area plan. While the landowner and/or rancher can deny access to lands he/she owns, a grazing lessee cannot deny access to public lands that are part of the lease strictly on account of the lease "control." However, State law prohibits stays of more than one-half hour at wildlife waters and because most livestock waters also provide water for wildlife, this limit usually applies. Regarding the testing of water supplies, only waters slated for human consumption and selected waters to be developed for wildlife will be tested. Your suggestions regarding water availability are reasonable and will be considered in the final plan.

I. Vegetation

General Comments

263 [Gerald Scherba, Desert Studies Consortium]
"Would it be possible, under the regulations that apply, to consider also the plant species listed by the California Native Plant Society? Because of the long lead time required for a species to be listed, some organizations consider the judgment of the CNPS in extending protection to plants."

Response:

Bureau policy in California is to preserve federal and state listed rare, threatened, or endangered plant species and to conserve "sensitive" plant species, which are usually candidate species (Federal Category 2) or proposed species (Federal Category 1). Working within these policy guidelines, all of the sensitive plants known to occur in the Scenic Area are also included on the CNPS 1B List. Most of the CNPS List 2 plants known to occur in the Scenic Area were once Federal Category 2 plants but have since been downgraded to Category 3 plants, which means that they are on a "watch" list. Many of the CNPS List 3 and List 4 plants are included in the Unusual Plant Assemblages. As you can see, the CNPS listings do receive consideration by BLM.

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15 [Walter Barbuck]
"On Page 21 where the discussion of Major Issues and Management Objectives begins, of the 11 issues nothing is said about endemic and or endangered species. Has the area had a thorough vegetative/animal inventory? How these resources are handled is a major factor in the health of an area."

Response:

The East Mojave was inventoried during the preparation of the East Mojave Unit Research Analysis in 1976 and that inventory was augmented during the preparation of the Desert Plan. Endangered species are thoroughly protected under the auspices of the Endangered Species Act.

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8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"The following constitute the basis for a more acceptable minimal set of objectives to resolve the conflicts.

Establish a nursery of native plants to use in rehabilitating areas.

Eliminate all commercial and private harvesting of plants in the EMNSA, including wood collecting, and casual use as firewood for camping.

Eliminate all noxious and invasive nonnative species from the EMNSA. (Russian Thistle, Tamarisk, and Ice Plant being three).

Evaluate the effect of grazing on changes in distribution and density of native species. If grazing is going to continue, adjust grazing allocations to minimize these changes from natural levels.

Discourage use of nonnative species in settled areas.

Resist all attempts to use nonnative species to reseed areas which have burned.

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The nursery is an important tool used by Joshua Tree National Monument. When it is necessary to use a vehicle which would destroy vegetation, the major plants are moved to the nursery and used to revegetate disturbed areas. This reestablishes cover much faster than scarifying an area and hoping for a good rain and few rodents. Firewood cutting and use in campfires should be discontinued NOW. Rodent and insect populations depend on this dwindling organic source material. The stated objective is too generic to be useful to any manager. There are over 700 species in the East Mojave -- reportedly more than the entire State of Alaska!"

Response:

Each of the suggested actions has merit and will receive consideration during both the planning and implementation phases of this plan. Nursery areas are a valid means to achieve reclamation goals and are currently in use at one major mine in the Scenic Area and will be used at another major mine. A central nursery is impractical at this time, given the vast acreage of the Scenic Area, the elevational changes and concurrent vegetation changes, and types and extent of disturbances when compared to Joshua Tree National Monument. BLM will continue to require project proponents to maintain nursery areas for their specific projects when it is deemed necessary.

It is virtually impossible to entirely eliminate all noxious and invasive species in the East Mojave due to the size of the area, the ease with which seed is transported by unsuspecting individuals, the close proximity to two interstate highways, and the current prohibitions concerning herbicide use on Public lands. The goal is commendable, however.

The BLM is responsible for the administration and management of the Public lands, and as such, it is neither our responsibility nor within our legal rights to dictate to private landowners what to plant or not to plant on their private property. Discouraging nonnative plantings on private lands is more properly the task of state, county, and local governments and organizations such as the California Native Plant Society. The subject will be discussed with County officials.

As a rule, the Needles Resource Area does not require any reseeding of burned areas due to the lack of success in reseeding in the desert and the fact that we have very few fires of any consequence in the Scenic area. However, some non-native species have value in establishing quick ground cover for erosion control and, operating within legal and regulatory constraints, BLM reserves the right to use whatever seed mix it deems appropriate in any given situation. We do however, appreciate any suggestions from any qualified individuals, organizations, businesses, or governmental agencies concerning seed mixes, reseeding methods, etc.

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243 [Daniel Pritchett]
"The fundamental problem with the plan lies in its failure to value native flora and fauna apart from the "uses" humans may make of them. With so many of our native ecosystems destroyed or degraded their preservation becomes an ethical, as well as an environmental issue. If the significance of native

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ecosystems in the area is properly seen, human activities will be judged primarily by their compatibility with the sustenance of the ecosystems. Mining, ORV use and rockhounding are clearly not compatible, no matter how popular these activities may be with some segments of the public."

Response:

To the contrary, the Plan does value native flora and fauna apart from the "uses" we humans make of them, and that value is reflected in the recognition of the scenic and other values found in the East Mojave and the many constraints which Public land users in the East Mojave will have to operate under when the Plan is approved. However, BLM must manage the public lands in accordance with the laws of the United States, and as such, BLM is required to provide for multiple-use with sustained yield on lands under its management.

115 [Steven Hartman]
"As someone who is interested in the preservation of our native plant communities, I think that there is a bias in the plan toward consumptive practices and against preservation; for example, on page 90, displays of native wildflowers are called "excess plant forage". If grazing is allowed everywhere, the native plant communities are being eaten and trampled upon everywhere. The consumption of the flowers eliminates that portion of seed production, so only the hardy survive. Since the land is being constantly trampled and disturbed, weedy nonnative species (the seeds of which are often brought in by cattle) can invade and out-compete the native species (which haven't evolved techniques to survive grazing). The weedy species proliferate, the native species decline, and soon entire plant communities disappear. A true multi-use "scenic" area should have a plan to identify, protect, and monitor its native plant communities."

Response:

If there appears to be a "bias" in the Plan toward consumptive uses, it is because the laws BLM operates under requires that the public lands be made available for multiple-use with sustained yield. While multiple-use may embrace objectives to preserve an area, it does require that BLM consider existing uses in any land use decision. The native plant communities one currently sees in the Scenic Area have been grazed for the last 100 years. The native plant communities have been identified and are monitored primarily within the parameters of the range management program. Special or unusual communities are monitored annually by a BLM botanist.

I-1 Restore Native Vegetation at Selected Seeps and Springs

41 [William Brooks]
"Suggest that some attempt be made to identify what time frame or ecological succession reference is used to identify "native species" and that natural succession trends be enhanced through site manipulation and not simply be left to tamarisk removal."

115 [Steven Hartman]
"How can BLM state (#7 on page 24) that "...no specific threats to significant species or communities were identified..." when an entire habitat is being sucked dry by tamarisks? I highly commend the planners for restoring native vegetation at selected seeps and springs (I-1), but nowhere is it mentioned that riparian habitats throughout the Mojave Scenic Area are drying up because of tamarisk invasion, and I fell that it is untrue not to state that this is a problem.

Tamarisk invasion, however, is not the only concern. How many introduced weeds have invaded the East Mojave National Scenic Area because of disturbed conditions? BLM should begin a monitoring program whereby the presence and absence of invasive weeds (i.e., Russian thistle) or escaped exotics (i.e., tamarisk) is recorded and made public. As the custodian of the land and its resources, BLM must determine the extent and condition of native plant communities, which are in themselves an irreplaceable resource."

207 [Bob McDowell]
"Eradicate tamarisk by using work parties for removal, or if practical, by burning. Under no circumstances are herbicides to be used, as they can potentially contaminate water sources and harm wildlife."

28 [Rob & Kate Blair]
"We do not support any proposal to fence off existing water sources. The wildlife centered around these waters would be effected even if "alternate waters" were provided.

Response:

For the purposes of the Plan, native species are those plants recognized by various taxonomic references as being indigenous to the region. This eliminates not only obviously introduced species but also those that have become "naturalized" (for example, red brome). Some site manipulation will be required at certain sites, but in most cases, the removal of tamarisk "releases" the remaining native plants to quickly rehabilitate the area.

The phrase "at selected seeps and springs" refers to the need of prioritizing areas to receive treatment because of funding and staffing constraints. It is BLM's intention to eventually remove tamarisk and restore native vegetation at all seeps and springs not only in the East Mojave but the entire Needles Resource Area. Unfortunately, BLM is currently under a moratorium on herbicide use due to a lawsuit, thus BLM has lost its most effective means of eradicating tamarisk. Introduced weeds are not a major problem in the East Mojave due to the extreme climatic conditions, but those areas which have a high potential for introductions (primarily along roads) are periodically checked by both BLM and the County Agricultural Commissioner.

In some areas of small extent, tamarisk can be eradicated by work parties. However, without a follow-up application of an acceptable herbicide (Tordon) using safe methods (hand sprayer on cut stumps), re-sprouting will occur and tamarisk will re-invade the area. Burning is not an effective method for the same reason.

The fencing of existing springs is a method used to prevent livestock and burros from trampling a water source and either eating or otherwise destroying the vegetation around the seep. Any wildlife smaller than a deer or bighorn would not be affected by a fence. An alternate water source could provide water for the larger wildlife using the water source. Fencing may be constructed to allow continued access by deer or bighorn sheep.

I-2 Firewood Collection

184 [Bernie & Carol Mauldin, CA Federation of Mineralogical Societies]
"Concerning firewood. Rockhounds usually take their own firewood into Desert Areas, use what they need and leave the rest for the next persons. Suggest this as a possible policy for BLM instead of allowing the gathering of scarce desert resource."

278 [Jane Southcott]
"If the BLM offered briquettes and/or wood for sale, particularly at Mid Hills campground this might prevent - or at least discourage vandalism of the trees."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"The continued "casual collection" of dead and down wood is necessary (however, please emphasize the dead and down). We would encourage you to print in all informational items dealing with camping etc. that the public should be encouraged to bring firewood with them for desert use."

119 [Mary Ann Henry]
"I oppose casual collection of dead and down fuelwood for your reasons given in I-2, pg. 87. A campfire is part of the wilderness mystique; is not related to providing warmth; is done "because we have always done it". Desert shrubs are fragile; they appear dead when merely dormant; people do not respect shrubs. Forbid any collection of live or dead biomass NOW over the entire Scenic Area. People can bring in their own wood for their campfire. The business community can have firewood (manufactured Presto type logs) available for purchase."

Response:

Casual collection of firewood for campfire purposes only is proposed to be continued, but BLM will encourage, through the use of brochures, news releases, etc., visitors to the area to bring their own fuel source. Also, BLM will encourage local merchants to provide fuel for sale.

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28 [Rob & Kate Blair]
"We do NOT support the elimination of firewood sales for the following reasons
1) The amount of fuel that can be accessed from an existing road or campground would have little if any impact on the total amount of dead biomass in the Scenic Area. This argument holds true despite increased visitor use.
2) Provisions would have to be made for residents within the Scenic Area."

254 [Elizabeth Ridgely]
"How can you eliminate firewood sales for local residents whose heating and cooking depend on it? Loss of litter in areas of under 10" annual precipitation does not affect plant regeneration and therefore does it neither effect the nutrient cycle."

27 [Howard Blair]
"I think fuel wood gathering should be limited to use in the Scenic Area for residents and visitors. As far as dead biomass being used up, there is no way we can use up over 5% of it because we are limited to gathering in the areas where there are roads."

Response:

In the past, firewood sales have been limited to residents only, while casual collection of firewood for campfires has been a privilege extended to both residents and visitors. The 10 year time-frame before existing supplies of fuelwood are exhausted is based on the average annual sales in the past and for those areas easily accessible from existing roads.

It is unlikely that any of the local residents rely solely on firewood for heating and cooling. In any event, alternative fuel sources such as propane, kerosene, etc., are readily available, and the private lands within the East Mojave are available for use as the landowner sees fit, including the harvesting of plant material. While the loss of plant litter in areas of less than 10 inches of annual precipitation may not affect plant regeneration, it most certainly removes biomass, which removes nutrients from the cycle.

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"Elimination of firewood sales is something I heartily support. However, casual collection is not defined. While a dead limb used in a campfire, I agree, is casual collection, what about tossing 10 or 20 dead limbs in the back of a pickup? Is this action still to be defined as casual collecting? Your rangers, I feel, might require more careful guidance on this matter."

Response:

Casual collection is only that amount necessary for immediate use at the campsite. Depending on a number of factors (such as location, number of people in the party, and length of stay), 10-20 limbs in the back of a pickup could be considered casual collection.

283 [Glenn Stewart, Desert Tortoise Council]
"We support the proposal to eliminate firewood sales as soon as possible. We oppose the use of downed wood for firewood and the collecting of dead or downed pinyon, juniper, catclaw, mesquite, or other desert trees and shrubs. Even casual collecting should be closely monitored and supervised. The decaying wood is an essential part of the ecosystem for many desert animals. For example, some desert lizards use such vegetation almost exclusively for shelter and food sources. Juvenile tortoises often seek cover in downed wood and piles of brush."

225 [Jeffrey Opkepke, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service]
"The Service recommends that proposal I-2 be altered to eliminate all collection of firewood. The discussion associated with this proposal correctly

indicates that dead and down wood is a limited resource which is important to wildlife populations and nutrient recycling. Because of the relatively small amount of down wood, even "casual" collecting can rapidly eliminate local supplies. To anyone unfamiliar with desert vegetation, most shrubs appear dead for the greater part of the year. Collecting of dormant shrubs, under the mistaken impression that they are dead, would eliminate living vegetation. Finally, any enforcement involving excessive "casual" wood collection would be extremely difficult, since no strict qualification for permissible limits has been set."

258 [Mary Lou Rosczyk]
"The proposed management plan for vegetation appears to have some weak spots: In view of the fact that "dead and down fuelwood in the East Mojave can sustain existing use levels for ten years or less" (p.87), I think that the BLM should stipulate that even casual collection may have to be restricted because dead biomass is essential habitat for some rarer species. Also no mention is made of whether the harvesting of live plants for personal use will continue to be authorized. I think that such permits should be restricted to specified common species and specified areas as long as their numbers permit such harvesting. Finally, I think that any exception to herbicide use on public lands be restricted to the genus Tamarix."

207 [Bob McDowell]
"I agree with the elimination of firewood sales. Casual firewood collecting should be severely restricted, as down and dead wood aids wildlife habitat and aids soil renewal. With the anticipated 200,000+ people visiting EMNSA in the future, allowing firewood collection could cause a serious depletion. BLM should initiate a "snag" policy to allow standing dead trees, particularly in Pinyon Pine areas to remain as they too provide wildlife habitat. All commercial harvesting of plants must cease in the EMNSA, nor should harvesting for personal use be allowed."

184 [Bernie & Carol Mauldin, CA Federation of Mineralogical Societies]
"While ending firewood sales is a good first step, eliminating firewood collection should not be postponed. BLM acknowledges that even casual collection may outstrip the resource within ten years. Instead of waiting for a problem, prevent it."

Response:

The statement that "dead and down fuelwood in the East Mojave can sustain existing use levels for ten years or less" refers only to fuelwood sales of pinon and juniper. The sales are for one cord each. The statement incorrectly implies that casual collection is included. No use of herbicides other than for tamarisk eradication is currently foreseen.

The intent of eliminating firewood sales is to provide for standing dead trees (pinon and juniper snags) and also to provide for nutrient recycling. Commercial harvesting is not permitted in the Scenic Area except for the occasional "salvage" operation.

115 [Steven Hartman]
"Regarding the elimination of firewood sales (I-2), it seems to me that a great idea would be to allow (promote) cutting of tamarisk for firewood. I know there might be some things to sort out (the need to spray the freshly cut stumps with poison to stop re-growth), but perhaps through a volunteer organization or even a concession, this would work to everyone's advantage."

Response:

On most of the Public lands in the East Mojave, the tamarisk trees are of too small a diameter to provide fuelwood, although an occasional tamarisk will have achieved firewood size. The use of volunteers to assist in tamarisk eradication efforts has been and will continue to be used. BLM may consider making any suitable tamarisk cuttings available for firewood at the campgrounds or Desert Information Outposts.

Monitoring

225 [Jeffrey Opkepke, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service]
"Annual inspections of unusual plant assemblages and existing or potential habitat for sensitive, threatened, or endangered species would be inadequate to assess trends of these vegetation types. We recommend that permanent monitoring transects be established in these areas and annual quantification of the vegetation's condition be done at the appropriate season. Data should be collected in a fashion that would allow comparison between years, so that trends could be determined and corrective measures instituted, if necessary. Please refer to our previous comments regarding wood cutting and collecting."

Response:

While annual inspections of UPAs and existing and/or potential habitat of sensitive species is inadequate to determine trend, in many cases a determination of trend is not necessary due to an almost complete absence of man-induced impacts. In these cases, BLM assumes that natural forces prevail and the only level of monitoring (or surveillance) required is that needed to determine if the status quo is being maintained. In cases where man-induced impacts are discovered or are known to be occurring, a more intensive level of monitoring would be considered.

Additional Needs

5 [Harriet Allen]
"Prohibit the harvesting of native plant materials. Determine closures by season or area to protect unique and pressured plants or plant communities."

Response:

BLM already prohibits commercial native plant harvesting in the Scenic Area except in salvage situations. Vegetation is considered in all route designation decisions, and has been used to justify specific route or area closures.

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"Page 86 notes that "harvesting of live plants for personal use such as landscaping is authorized by permit, but collection within the Scenic Area is discouraged. Such harvesting should be entirely forbidden within the Scenic Area, not merely discouraged. Again, is this a special area, or not? The fact that this Draft Plan has been produced argues that BLM feels this is indeed a special area. Congress has certainly indicated that it feels the area is special. So, please go all the way with your regulations and protect this Area and its many assets, including its vegetation."

85 [Donald Falk, Desert Survivors]
"Personal plant collection within the EMNSA should be discontinued rather than merely discouraged."

Response:

BLM permits the taking of up to five specimens of any given plant species, subject to both state and federal law. Our policy of discouraging plant collection within the Scenic Area for personal use is adequate in that almost all species occurring within the area also occur outside the East Mojave. If all plant collection within the Scenic Area is eliminated, then potentially valuable botanical research would be foregone.

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135 [Lynn Jacobs]
"Native vegetation should be reintroduced into areas where it has been eliminated. All other vegetation manipulation programs should be stopped. Special attention should be given to plants that have become rare or endangered."

Response:

Native vegetation is being introduced in areas where it has been depleted or is being crowded out by exotics. However, some form of vegetation manipulation (tamarisk removal, seed bed preparation. etc.) is usually required for the reintroduction to "take". Special attention is given to those species designated as "sensitive" by BLM. There are currently no federally listed threatened or endangered plants known to occur in the Scenic Area, and only one state listed plant.

J. Wildlife

General Comments

148 [Robert Kanne]
"On page 116 you mentioned that there are three "sensitive" wildlife species in the EMNSA. You then mention the desert tortoise and the bighorn sheep, but what is the third species?"

Response:

The third "sensitive" species is the banded gila monster discussed in the first paragraph on page 116 The Scenic Area plan has been corrected to include this and other recently designated species.

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14 [Mrs. Frederick Bacher, Jr.]
"We looked in vain for discussions of the bighorn sheep hunting now going on in part of the EMNSA!!"

Response:

There is a short reference to bighorn sheep hunting on pages 116 and 149 of the draft Plan. It has been illegal to hunt desert bighorns in California since 1873. Recent legislation allows a limited number of permits to be issued (9 for 1987) for the Old Dad Mountain/Kelso Peak area and the Marble Mountains. Hunting regulations and the issuance of hunting permits are under the jurisdiction of the state, not the BLM.

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5 [Harriet Allen]
"Determine seasons or areas for [vehicle] closure to protect desert tortoise and bighorn and their food sources. Enact measures for enforcement and education."

Response:

The Scenic Area plan calls for closure to vehicles of many routes, particularly washes, in crucial desert tortoise habitat. Additional closures have been considered in bighorn habitat, but generally light vehicle use, and lack of any evidence that such use is impacting bighorn habitat indicates that vehicle closures are not warranted at this time. However, vehicle use and bighorn populations are monitored, and new information will be considered during the annual review of vehicle route designations.

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135 [Lynn Jacobs]
"Wildlife developments (such as watering tanks) should be employed only as last resorts. Overwhelming priority should be given to habitat preservation and rejuvenation."

Response:

Habitat preservation and rejuvenation are considered high priorities in the Scenic Area. Water is a component of habitat, and is frequently the limiting factor for many wildlife populations (eg. bighorn sheep, quail). Thus, in many cases, water developments are the most effective tool we can employ in the preservation and rejuvenation of habitat. Availability and feasibility of developing natural water sources without water tanks is always explored first. However, when natural sources are not available or feasible to develop, artificial means such as wells or catchments with associated water tanks (storage tanks, guzzlers, drinkers) must be employed. Opportunities for other habitat improvements in association with water development projects are evaluated during the survey and design phase of project planning.

J-1, J-2 Bighorn Sheep

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"The addition of guzzlers to increase sheep herds to levels above natural populations should be discouraged except in coordination with a program to reintroduce sheep to former ranges. The Scenic Area should not become a bighorn sheep farm. Many other ranges in the East Mojave also had sheep populations and may be suitable for reintroduction in addition to the range indicated.

Who is paying for the transplant program? Funding levels would barely cover the administrative paperwork on the transfer."

Response:

It is the Bureau's policy to support state game agencies in accomplishing sound wildlife management objectives. In this case, we believe the development of harvestable and sustainable bighorn populations, as well as seed populations for transplants to other unoccupied historical ranges is sound management.

The program is funded by BLM and California Department of Fish and Game. Costs are for many support activities in addition to the actual transplant. These support activities, necessary for successful transplants, include planning, inventory, studies, habitat development, and burro removal.

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5 [Harriet Allen]
"J1-2 appears to be designed to develop bighorn herds for hunting and trophy purposes as a long-range goal."

Response:

The California Department of Fish and Game, BLM and volunteers have worked for many years to reestablish bighorn herds for the benefit of the species. Many have also hoped that limited bighorn hunting could be permitted once populations were restored.

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279 [Richard Spotts, Defenders of Wildlife]
"Another weakness relates to the introduction of bighorn sheep. BLM focuses on bighorn sheep introduction into the Mescal/Ivanpah Mountains, but fails to likewise recommend transplants into other East Mojave historic bighorn range. We urge BLM to incorporate recommendations from the California Department of Fish and Game, and to encourage transplants in the Woods, Hackberry, Van Winkle, Cinder Cones, and other appropriate ranges.

Other strengthening improvements are needed, such as further restrictions on mineral leasing, firewood collecting, and campground management on or near important habitats."

Response:

The Scenic Area plan does not preclude additional transplants into historical range. However, the Mescal and Ivanpah ranges are considered to have the greatest potential for successful transplants relative to other unoccupied ranges. Other desert ranges outside the East Mojave are also being considered for transplanting over the next few years; at this point, firm decisions have not been made by BLM/CDF&G on what additional ranges in the East Mojave will be considered during the next ten years. Impacts to bighorn habitat from other uses have been considered during this plan's development, and will be analyzed when specific sites are located for recommended actions.

J-3 Elf Owls

5 [Harriet Allen]
"Is Piute Creek campground/activity area a potential conflict with reintroduction program?"

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"Biologists are concerned about species which have become isolated and are focussing on questions of gene pools — maintaining diversity, and protection from "contamination." Both bighorn sheep and elf owl programs should be reviewed for their impact on the long term viability of the species.

Besides protecting new Elf Owls at Piute Creek, BLM should be surveying other washes with Elf Owl populations, for example Aiken Wash, and protecting them also."

Response:

There is some potential for conflict between livestock grazing, hunting, and recreational shooting (plinking, target shooting). The approved Piute Creek Management Plan includes a management action (No. 10) for restrictive fencing to protect the area from livestock grazing. The Scenic Area Plan proposes to resolve the shooting conflict by closing the Piute Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern to all shooting.

Aiken Wash is a dry wash type of habitat containing Desert Willow, rather than a wet riparian type typical of elf owl habitat. All known elf owl habitat is periodically surveyed for elf owl occurrence. The most recent survey was conducted during the spring and summer of 1987. No new populations were found.

J-4 Wildlife Waters

171 [Neil Lienhard]
"I would like to see the ... watering devices along the pipelines that [supply] water to the cattle watering troughs [be made available to] all other types of wildlife ..."

85 [Donald Falk, Desert Survivors]
"Natural water sources in areas still grazed by livestock should be fenced and piped to troughs to protect the water sources until cattle are removed. Escape ramps for wildlife should be provided in all troughs."

Response:

These actions have already been adopted by BLM as "standard operating procedures."

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273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"I fear that many of the corral area troughs, even if lowered to 18 inches, will still be inaccessible to most wildlife because of surrounding fences, lack of cover, devastated surroundings, and the presence of many cattle. Again, elimination of cattle entirely would be the much better wildlife solution."

Response:

The 18 inch height limitation on troughs is primarily meant to facilitate use by big game. As stated in J-4 (page 89), water for small game and non-game would be piped off-site from troughs where feasible and appropriate. Feasibility, appropriateness, and design details are evaluated on a site specific basis. Water requirements for both wildlife and cattle can usually be satisfied with this kind of approach.

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5 [Harriet Allen]
"Danger of transmitting cattle disease to bighorn needs to be closely analyzed. Recommend: reappraise J-4 in light of current research and the findings of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park cattle lift, summer, 1987."

Response:

Thank you for your comment. Monitoring of cattle-bighorn disease vectors has been added to the final plan's Monitoring section.

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8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"The wildlife rock sites and ramps must be made of carved ivory to justify the expense. Please explain."

Response:

Escape structures in troughs for small birds and mammals are a standard technique and procedure for protecting wildlife. These are normally inexpensive, falling in the $10-$20 range per structure.

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150 [Pat Keeling]
"I recommend that small seeps from drip tubes would make a more viable watering trough than the 18" bird/small animal watering troughs. We have done this on the lower end of Black Canyon wash."

Response:

We will consider this option in future water developments; however, maintenance costs of this option may be too high for widespread use.

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254 [Elizabeth Ridgely]
"Where are cattle, deer, and burros going to water [at Piute Creek]? The pipeline off of the creek is non-functional."

Response:

A portion of Piute Creek will not be fenced, thus providing access to water for cattle and burros. In addition, there is a second pipeline which is functional and leads to watering facilities. We are not aware of deer at Piute Creek, but the possibility certainly exists.

J-5 Desert Tortoise

283 [Glenn Stewart, Desert Tortoise Council]
"(1) The BLM has not adequately developed specific recommendations to protect tortoise populations and habitat in the East Mojave. The recommendations shown in the document are but a small portion of what is needed. If the East Mojave receives a substantial increase in visitor use, we expect to see an increase in collecting and vandalism of tortoises, disposal of unwanted captives from different genetic groups and species, and additional losses to populations and impacts to habitat. This Plan has not provided sufficient protection to prevent such losses. In fact, the Plan has increased the potential for collection by identifying prime tortoise habitat on Map F.

(2) On page 89, the BLM states that tortoise populations in the East Mojave appear to be stable. We must emphasize that this information is based on data from only two plots in very high tortoise densities and in relatively undisturbed areas. We do not think this statement is characteristic of tortoise populations in the region. We do not believe that you can use such information to infer stability without, at the same time, bringing up other, relevant information. Examples include the excessively high annual mortality rates in adult tortoises in 1980-81 and 1981-82 (4.4% and 18.4%, respectively) at the Ivanpah Valley livestock exclosure and study plot. This information is

documented by Turner et al. in reports and the open literature. Normal annual mortality rates for adults are in the neighborhood of 1.5 to 1.8%. At the same time mortality was high in Ivanpah Valley, there was a die-off in the Crescent Peak allotment in adjacent Nevada. This die-off was documented in some detail by the Nevada Department of Wildlife and was attributed to overgrazing by cattle combined with a brief drought. The BLM has other data that indicate that tortoise populations in the East Mojave in lower density populations are not doing well, e.g., the Shadow Valley study plot.

(3) The BLM has only two tortoise trend plots in the East Mojave Scenic Area. Both plots are in high density habitat and are unlikely to be representative of trends and conditions throughout the East Mojave. We recommend that the BLM establish other plots in areas with lower tortoise densities, more human use, and closer to livestock watering, trailing, and bedding areas. Especially important would be additional plots in the Fenner and Shadow Valleys and on the Kelso habitat area, as well as on lands harvested for yuccas.

(4) The information (in paragraph 4, page 88) is only partially correct. We request that you reread the papers and materials involved and correct the problem areas. For example, the comments about the livestock exclosures are misleading. The exclosure was built in 1980 during the spring season when the study was underway. Because of this, grazing on the two plots differed only slightly (we quote from Dr. Turner's report). In 1981, few if any cattle were seen in the area. Again, grazing treatment differed only slightly, if at all. The 1980-81 study established that the livestock grazing plots were essentially identical in tortoise densities and vegetation production (information essential to future monitoring). These were baseline studies. They could not begin to show differences in tortoise densities, because of the reproductive characteristics of the tortoise and because desert vegetation is slow to recover from the impacts of livestock grazing. We strongly recommend that the exclosure gates be kept closed (we have learned that the gates were opened and that livestock frequented the area a few years ago). We recommend that the livestock grazing study be repeated as soon as possible.

(5) Since you are going to be encouraging increased visitor use in the region (an increase of 200,000 to 250,000 visits per year), we recommend that you provide for tortoise-proof fencing an tortoise culverts on all major roads in Ivanpah Valley (Ivanpah Road, Morning Star Mine Road, Nipton Road) and in Fenner Valley (Lanfair Road, Goffs Road, Essex Road, east-west road between Goffs area and the Providence Mountains). An increase in vehicle traffic on roads will result in collecting and road kills. You cannot prevent this with signs, speed limits, and policies.

We recommend that you provide consistent land-use protection to tortoise populations that extend south to northern Ward Valley and south of I-40, also populations that extend east and northeast to the Piute Valley and Nevada. Corridors such as these are critical to maintain.

(6) The BLM has not monitored the tortoise study plots in the East Mojave at four-year intervals, although the BLM has stated that they would monitor at four year intervals. The BLM monitored the Ivanpah plot in 1979 and again in 1986, a hiatus of seven years. The BLM monitored the Goffs plot in 1977 and 1980. Southern California Edison sponsored the four-year study at Goffs in conjunction with the Bureau and UCLA between 1983 and 1986. The purpose of the

study was to gather data for a life table -- a survivorship study. Data was gathered on many subjects, including reproduction and mortality."

Response:

(1) The BLM is developing a habitat management plan (HMP) for each of the tortoise crucial habitats. These HMP's will address all aspects of tortoise management, both in and out of the East Mojave National Scenic Area. The proper way to address abuses of tortoises (e.g., collecting, shooting, moving) is not to discourage visitors, but rather to educate them on resource issues and needs. Outdoor recreation generally increases environmental awareness. The information on Map F has been widely distributed in the Desert Plan. We have no evidence of a concerted effort by people to go to high density areas to collect tortoises; it is believed that most are collected in chance encounters along roads.

(2) We are continuing to monitor tortoise populations at established trend plots. If declines are indicated, the need for further management action may be indicated. The mortality referenced (Turner et al.) was in a study of individuals with radio transmitters on them which may have artificially increased mortality; subsequent surveys on the trend plot overlapping this study site showed no declines. This latter result would be very unusual if overall mortality (as opposed to mortality of radio-marked animals) was as high as 4.4% or 18.4% for two consecutive years.

(3) The plots were placed in high density areas to yield the highest possible sample sizes for statistical analysis. High conflict points were generally avoided so the plot would not merely represent one given conflict but would represent overall conditions. The Ivanpah plot overlaps a transmission line and roadway and includes cattle grazing; we believe it is typical of Ivanpah Valley south and east of Interstate 15. The Goffs plot is also within a cattle grazing allotment. There are two other plots within the Fenner-Chemehuevi Tortoise Crucial Habitat Area but outside of the Scenic Area. Although the BLM is considering adding a plot in Shadow Valley, the cost of surveys precludes a large increase above the 16 plots desert-wide which we are attempting to maintain on a regular cycle.

(4) The second sentence of paragraph four is changed to read, "The initial two-year study funded by BLM established baseline comparisons of tortoise populations and vegetation between the grazed and newly excluded areas; future studies will show the effects of excluding grazing over a period of time.

(5) As stated in the plan, the BLM will develop habitat management plans which will address tortoise issues in greater depth. Measures such as those proposed will be considered in these HMPs.

(6) Comment noted. Inadequate funding in 1983 and 1984 caused a break in the four-year cycle. After the survey of three plots in 1988, we will be back on schedule again.

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56 [Michael Ceaser]
"... I was amazed that you did so little to protect the desert tortoise. Four of the five areas that you found suitable for wilderness designation intersect

'Desert Tortoise Critical Areas', but they do so only slightly. In my visual estimation, less than ten percent of the DTCAs would be protected by the wilderness you recommended. Come on, you can do better than that. In fact, it appears to the untutored observer that you have tried your best to avoid protecting DTCAs wherever possible. I don't really believe this, of course.

Similarly, none of the DTCAs were designated ACECs. I simply don't understand this because I've heard that the desert tortoise is having so many problems."

Response:

Several types of designations may be made for lands with significant resource values, including wilderness or Areas of Critical Environmental Concern as you suggest, but also "crucial desert tortoise habitat," and in the California desert, the "limited" multiple use class. Several factors were involved in wilderness recommendations; including the availability of alternate management strategies to protect significant resources when justification for a suitable wilderness recommendations could not be made due to compelling concerns. BLM feels that the Habitat Management Plans which will be prepared can adequately address the "problems" of the desert tortoise.

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279 [Richard Spotts, Defenders of Wildlife]
"Unfortunately, we believe that the Draft Management Plan and Proposed Action are weak in a number of crucial areas. For example, much greater management improvements are urgently needed to arrest the declines in desert tortoise populations. BLM has administratively designated four crucial habitats for the desert tortoise in Southern California. Two of these relate to the East Mojave National Scenic Area: Fenner Valley and Ivanpah Valley. Defenders and others petitioned the U.S. FIsh and Wildlife Service in September 1984 to list the desert tortoise as an endangered species. Later, the petition was found to be biologically warranted but precluded at that time due to higher priority listings. During the intervening years, tortoise studies continue to indicate a downward trend in most tortoise habitats. Additional restrictions on livestock grazing, off-road vehicle uses, and other human activities must be pursued if the tortoise declines are to be stopped, and the populations in these crucial habitats recovered. However, we do support and appreciate the tortoise habitats which would be acquired for protection as described on Tables 2-3 and 2-4.

Response:

Tortoise studies have indicated downward trends in some areas of the West Mojave but not in the East Mojave. Analyses of trend plot surveys in the East Mojave have shown no declines. In order to ensure that populations remain stable and viable in the East Mojave, habitat management plans (HMPs) will be prepared for all tortoise crucial habitat areas. The HMPs will address all issues.

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58 [Jayne Chavez-Scales, California Turtle & Tortoise Club]
"(1) What are the names of the persons who conducted the two-year (desert

tortoise) study? What time of the year was the study conducted?
(2) What study was used to conclude that the Desert Tortoise was "stable?" I commend the closure of the washes to vehicle use. How about eliminating shooting in these CDTH areas too? I commend the BLM for trying to acquire lands for the CDTHs.
(3) Recommend to Fish & Game that no collecting of Desert Tortoises will be allowed in the Ivanpah and Fenner Valleys and other CDTH's.
(4) Is there a HMP in the Fenner and Ivanpah Valleys? If not, I recommend that one be implemented.
(5) A person of expertise on the Desert Tortoise should be included on the "interdisciplinary" team to determine turn out dates for ephemeral cattle in highly [Crucial Desert Tortoise Habitat]."

Response:

(1) The studies were conducted by P.A. Medica, C.L. Lyons, and F.B. Turner. The results were reported in the Proceedings of the Desert Tortoise Council 1982 Symposium (pp. 99-124). The study was conducted in March through October 1980 and March through June 1981.
(2) Analyses of trend plots in Chemehuevi Valley (1979, 1981), Ivanpah Valley (1979, 1986), near Goffs (1980, 1983-86), and Upper Ward Valley (1980, 1987) have shown no statistically significant changes in tortoise density over the survey periods. These plots are due for resurvey in 1988, 1990, 1990, and 1991, respectively. Analyses of tortoise shell recovered in these surveys have shown a very low incidence of shooting of tortoises (K.H. Berry; 1986;Incidence of gunshot deaths in desert tortoise populations in California; Wildlife Society Bulletin 14:127-132). Therefore, a shooting closure for tortoise protection in the East Mojave does not appear to be necessary at this time.

(3) Collection of desert tortoises is currently prohibited by state law.

(4) Habitat management plans will be developed for each tortoise crucial habitat area, including the areas mentioned.

(5) The composition of the interdisciplinary team is prescribed by the Desert Plan (p. 70). The turnout is based on considerations for maintaining adequate forage for wildlife, erosion prevention, and visual needs. This determination does not require special tortoise expertise above that of the BLM resource area wildlife biologist.

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175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"The tortoise population in the East Mojave appears to be stable. What justification makes this hearty reptile a candidate for threatened species status?"

Response:

In some areas, for example the West Mojave, tortoise populations are declining precipitously. Major reasons include habitat deterioration and excessive mortality due to collecting, raven predation, shooting, and road kills. The designation of threatened and endangered species and candidates for these lists is the responsibility of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California State Fish and Game Commission for the Federal and State lists, respectively.

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27 [Howard Blair]
"I think we have enough tortoise study areas. We can study them all we want to, but we can't increase their number."

Response:

It is the responsibility of the BLM to know the status of species occurring on public lands; to do this we have a series of 16 permanent study plots which are surveyed cyclically. Other studies have yielded important information on tortoise biology and conflicts. Through reduction in these conflicts we intend to maintain stable, viable populations within the tortoise crucial habitat areas. Habitat management plans will be developed to guide us in fulfillment of this goal.

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46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"We encourage the proposal to develop and implement habitat-protection plans for the desert tortoise. Research and monitoring are, of course, essential parts of this program. Again, the proposal to close washes and other particularly sensitive habitat to vehicular access would greatly assist in reducing harmful impacts to this vulnerable species."

Response: Comment noted.

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194 [D.L. Miller, Southern California Edison]
"Edison would also request a correction to the labelling of the desert tortoise habitat. Map F incorrectly labels crucial habitat as critical habitat. We would request that the map be corrected so that the habitat designation conforms to the remainder of the document. In addition, Map F enlarges the area designated as crucial tortoise habitat over that shown in the Desert Plan (Area W-26). The added area, marked in red on the enclosed copy of Map F, lies West of I-15 and is almost totally outside of the EMNSA. Edison's studies indicate that desert tortoise population density in the marked area is much lower than in the remainder of the Ivanpah crucial habitat area, appears to be declining, and is isolated from the rest of the population by I-15. For these reasons, Edison requests that the red marked area be deleted from the Ivanpah desert tortoise crucial habitat classification."

Response:

Map F in the Draft Plan is based on the most up-to-date data available to BLM biologists. Fragmentation of habitat and possibly declining numbers in many ways gives further justification to the designation of "crucial habitat."

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263 [Gerald Scherba, Desert Studies Consortium]
"I attempted to verify the facts as stated, and was unable to. Instead I was informed that the 1980 study gathered preliminary base line data only, in

anticipation of later comparative studies. Also, was told that the Ivanpah Valley plot was resurveyed after 7 years, instead of 4 and that the positioning of other exclosures is such as to question the conclusion that tortoise populations in the East Mojave are stable.

Instead, I suggest wording such as, the relationship between cattle grazing and tortoise populations is unclear and needs further study.

The basic issue is, I believe, the question of whether there is adequate protection of the tortoise from the impacts of grazing. Or, in other terms, has there been adequate allocation of vegetation for tortoise use."

Response:

These issues will be addressed more fully in allotment management plans and habitat management plans. The relationship between cattle and tortoises is unclear and does need further study. Competition for forage is one facet of the potential conflict between cattle and tortoises.

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35 [Pete Bontadelli, California Department of Fish and Game]
"The Fish and Game Commission is in receipt of a petition to formally list the desert tortoise as endangered pursuant to the California Endangered Species Act. Additionally, we recommend the removal of all symbols on maps showing locations of high density tortoise areas to help minimize future illegal take of the desert tortoise."

Response:

See response to comment 283 above (first paragraph).

Raptors

288 [Lee Swanberg]
"Castle Buttes in the New York Mountains, an important raptor breeding area needs extra protection, especially form O.R.V. and target shooting. Other raptor breeding sites need the same protection."

120 [Jim Herman]
"I am especially concerned that riparian areas and raptor breeding areas be afforded protection. I would urge exclusion of camping, target shooting, and ORVs from these areas."

Response:

Raptor concentration areas (breeding, nesting, foraging, wintering) have not been identified in the East Mojave. Management and protection of important raptor use areas is receiving greater and greater emphasis throughout the Bureau. Raptor HMP's would be developed for any important use areas identified in the future. Development of these plans is not contingent upon approval of the Scenic Area management plan.

K. Wild Horses and Burros

General Comments

85 [Donald Falk, Desert Survivors]
"All burros should be removed from the EMNSA.
Pending removal, water sources in burro areas should be fenced to protect them from degradation by burros."

61 [Duffie Clemens, Sierra Club-San Diego Chapter]
"These animals [horses and burros] are not native to the area and should be removed. They foul springs and streams and compete with native species for forage and water."

56 [Michael Ceaser]
"I'm not worried about the protection of wild burros or any other introduced species. Let's 'harvest' some of them."

5 [Harriet Allen]
"Expatriate immediately or relocate to preserves as per Arizona. A reserve in the EMNSA might be appropriate, but studies would need to be added to list."

153 [Richard & Eva Keeler]
"We also note that you plan to reduce and regulate the herds of wild burros and horses. In our opinion, these animals could well be eliminated completely. They are exotic, and compete with native wildlife for limited desert forage."

Response:

The Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-195) instructed that wild horses and burros are to be considered an integral part of the natural system of the public lands in those areas included in their yearlong habitat as of December 15, 1971. This includes portions of the EMNSA. The authors of the Desert Plan considered the effect of burros on other resources, especially wildlife and cultural resources. The proposed population levels in the Desert Plan mitigate these concerns, while providing for continued use by horses and burros. Burros in excess of the proposed populations are removed as funding allows and are made available for adoption.

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8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"A summary of the Herd Management Plan should be included. Somewhere in this document is a reference to a plan amendment to remove the herd management area. Shouldn't that be listed here as a proposed action? We support burro removals in the EMNSA."

Response:

A Herd Management Area Plan (HMAP) summary was not included in the plan because the East Mojave HMAP was considered to be of limited interest. The East Mojave HMAP describes the herd management areas (HMA's) and the local environment in addition to detailing removal procedures, monitoring techniques, and the Desert Plan's proposed populations.

This particular plan amendment to eliminate burros in the Cima Dome area was proposed by the grazing lessee in the 1985 Plan Amendments - it was not a Bureau proposed action. This amendment was rejected in January, 1987 on the basis that no information was presented showing that the present herd size is inappropriate.

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103 [Gay Gotses, Wild Horse Organized Assistance]
"According to the plan, out of the 17 areas under consideration, 15 of them list livestock grazing as a major activity, 3 of which are allotted to burros and a few horses. At least 3,500 head of cattle are given 26 water developments, rotating pastures and other range improvements, while 174 burros (to be reduced from 315) and 6 horses (to be reduced from 13) are put into overlap areas that the rotating cattle are given. The Kessler area allows for 7,847 cattle AUMs, 169 AUMs combined are allowed for bighorn sheep and deer, and 0 AUMs for burros. The numbers seem to be unfair to wildlife, including burros. Feral Equus gets AUMs based upon that which is given to cattle and other ruminants, and not based upon the burro being a burro. Or a horse a horse.

The potpourri of vegetation that the burro consumes may offer the burro variable seasonal preferences that are necessary for the burro's unique metabolism that enables him to survive and adapt to the desert's harsh clime. Because of overlapping with so much livestock does this force the burro to choose a different salad and does this in turn cause chemical changes that alter physiological behavior? Answers to the above type of question as well as those questions that deal with natality and mortality rates, migratory patterns of a generation, the effects of natural predators (including man), and the affects of BLM's adoption program on burro and horse ethology seem to be necessary before the burros and all 13 horses in the Eastern Mojave Scenic Area can be accused of overpopulating this area."

Response:

As the Desert Plan was being prepared, forage was initially allocated to wildlife, with the remaining available forage allocated to burros and livestock. Wildlife is not limited by cattle authorizations. Where no forage was allocated to burros, as in Kessler Springs, the reason was because of wildlife or cultural resource concerns, not because of cattle. The questions described are not as important in determining the proper management levels of horses and burros as are the availability of forage and potential impacts to other resources. Additional research on wild horses and burros has been contracted through the National Academy of Sciences.

L. Livestock Grazing.

General Comments

67 [Patrick Colgan, Sierra Club-San Francisco Bay Chapter]
"We note that almost 90% of the EMNSA is assigned to grazing allotments. (EA-140) However, the majority of the EMNSA is unsuited to grazing. We urge adjustment of the proposed Management, (p. 91), "no changes in use allocations for grazing...are being proposed". No mechanism for non-renewal of leases is addressed, but an agenda not to renew current grazing leases should be adopted in the final plan.

In this very dry, fragile terrain, grazing is relatively more damaging for the amount of feed obtained: that is — there's not much grass, so the cattle have to run over a lot of terrain to graze! Your L-3, removal of materials, is good, but cosmetic only; basically, eventual elimination of the grazing leases will remove need for such cleanup."

163 [Lawrence LaPre, Audubon Society-San Bernardino Valley]
"Grazing allotments should be phased out within the management area and the land allowed to recover to its natural state. In the interim, the grazing fees should be raised to provide a fair return for the government for the use of public lands."

85 [Donald Falk, Desert Survivors]
"The Draft Plan fails to address the problem of continued grazing in the East Mojave. The ever more marginal character of grazing in the area does not justify its continuance in the face of botanical and wildlife impacts. Livestock grazing should be phased out in the EMNSA."

28 [Rob and Kate Blair]
"We support not changing the allocations for grazing."

61 [Duffie Clemens, Sierra Club-San Diego Chapter]
"Phase out allotments as contracts expire. The revenue obtained from the allotments does not pay for the damage inflicted on resources. Soil compaction, vegetation loss, increased erosion, and fouled springs and streams result from livestock."

119 [Mary Ann Henry]
"Do not renew the 10-year leases. We get weary of cow flops on the desert; we worry about the cattle/sheep trampling and/or eating to nubbins the vegetation of all kinds."

Response:

Livestock grazing in the Scenic Area is managed under the mandates of the Taylor Grazing Act and FLPMA. FLPMA in particular directs that the CDCA should be managed for multiple use and sustained yield. The California Desert Plan considered all significant resources, including vegetation and wildlife, before delineating areas and levels of recommended livestock use. This occurred only after extensive public input. As a result, less than 50% of the CDCA supports livestock.

It is not the intent of the Scenic Area Plan to replace the Desert Plan. Decisions about grazing made after years of public input and compromise will not be reversed in this plan. Since the Scenic Area Plan's primary focus is on recreation, planned actions are limited to steps that will reduce conflicts between recreation and grazing. If grazing is to be eliminated, it must be done by amending the Desert Plan.

It appears to be questionable how detrimental cattle have been to this area, since after 100 years of continuous grazing, the region still maintains its primitive, scenic character. Widespread improvement in the vegetative condition indicates that a balance of uses may successfully occur. It should be noted that grazing fees are established by Congress, not the local BLM office.

35 [Pete Bontadelli, California Department of Fish and Game]
"We also are concerned regarding livestock grazing within the Scenic Area. We recommend that grazing allotments be closely examined and that the effects of grazing be documented. If grazing is found to reduce wildlife values, the significant reduction, or in particularly sensitive areas, elimination of at least portions of the allotments should be required. For example, in crucial desert tortoise areas, particularly in the Ivanpah and Fenner Valley areas the studies may find that overgrazing by cattle, road kills, and other factors may no longer be tolerable because their continuance would drive the species closer to endangerment."

58 [Jayne Chavez-Scales, California Turtle & Tortoise Club]
"Pages 9-17, 31, 33. It is absolutely amazing that grazing is permitted on all, but one, geographic areas described on pages 9-17. It is totally ludicrous that grazing is also permitted in all six AREAS of CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN listed on page 31. It is my recommendation that grazing be eliminated immediately on those six ACEC's, totalling 97,763 acres (Page 33, Table 2-2). Studies should be conducted on the other Special Areas to determine if grazing should be curtailed or eliminated."

115 [Steven Hartman]
"It was hard for me to believe that the ENTIRE area was allocated to grazing! One of the six management goals adopted by the Bureau (page 4 of the plan) was "Assure retention of the balance between use and natural values." What balance is there if grazing is everywhere?

BLM should at least eliminate grazing in Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) where wildlife habitat and vegetation are important resources, and create a non-grazing zone along the proposed "...60-mile-long trail through some of the East Mojave's most spectacular terrain..." (page V). It would be especially enjoyable if one could travel from end to end of the trail and not hear a motor or see a cow. Also, grazing should not be allowed in the areas where there are desert tortoises."

204 [Alma Myers]
"Your management plan will continue to allow grazing in sensitive areas such as Dunes. I hope you will stop this practice."

131 [Elden Hughes, Sierra Club-Angeles Chapter]
"Grazing should not be permitted in the ACEC's. Grazing should not be permitted on the Kelso Dunes. It is virtually impossible to find ungrazed dune grasses and dune grasses make beautiful pictures. Photography is a major recreation in the Dunes.

Our preferred alternative is the phasing out of grazing. Grazing makes the land an animal factory. This is a conflict with a protection alternative."

288 [Lee Swanberg]
"I feel grazing should not be allowed in ACEC's and if grazing is causing damage to bighorn sheep or desert tortoise habitat then grazing in those areas must be greatly restricted."

Response:

Several commenters expressed concern about grazing in ACECs or other sensitive areas. Studies to more precisely determine the effects of livestock on sensitive species and areas are planned, as described on page 91 of the draft Scenic Area plan. Additional studies may be conducted as funding permits. There is little or no evidence that ACECs, tortoise, or desert bighorn are presently being negatively impacted by cattle within the Scenic Area. Plans have been made to further protect riparian areas and evaluate impacts to the Kelso Dunes. As the AMPs are being revised (action L-1) attempts will be made to reduce the visibility of livestock operations in popular recreation areas.

A fence would be necessary to keep livestock out of any large area, such as the Kelso Dunes or hiking trails. However, the costs of constructing and maintaining such a fence would be prohibitive. Small areas may be more easily protected.

The Desert Plan did not consider livestock control to be necessary for any of these six ACECs. However the Piute Creek and Rock Springs ACECs will have sensitive portions fenced off to reduce conflicts with livestock. Cattle use is negligible in the sensitive portions of the New York Mountain and Clark Mountain ACECs, so no action is necessary. Cattle are not impacting the Dinosaur Trackway ACEC, and no livestock are present in the Soda Springs ACEC.

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324 [H.G. Wilshire]
"The existing grazing policy, which has resulted in widespread resource degradation and proliferation of unsightly range "improvements" (which are really areas of intensive use in so-called L class land), will be continued by this Plan."

43 [Peter Burk, Citizens for Mojave National Park]
"The plan proposes to do nothing to reduce or eliminate cattle grazing and its ugly "range improvements."

Response:

Congress directed the BLM through FLPMA, the Taylor Grazing Act, and the Public Rangeland Improvement Act, to install range improvements to enhance forage conditions for livestock and wildlife. Effortss are planned to reduce the visual profile of existisng and new improvements.

99 [Yitzhak Gilon]
"On page 118 you say most allotments are managed under deferred-rotation or rest-rotation grazing systems. I ask you which ones are and how about the other allotments?"

Response:

Rotation systems have been prescribed for all but two of these allotments. Round Valley allotment, with 653 acres, is too small to rotate use. The other allotment is Piute Valley. Because Piute Valley is an ephemeral allotment, a rotation system is not considered to be feasible.

150 [Pat Keeling]
"A correction on history - water was not hauled by the railroad for livestock. Most of the water developed by the railroads were from springs and wells. Livestock was watered by the same methods."

Response: Comment noted.

283 [Glenn Stewart, Desert Tortoise Council]
We are very disappointed that the BLM plans to make no reductions in livestock use in the East Mojave. We do not believe that all tortoise crucial habitat is in good condition. The rating system used by the BLM is designed to measure range condition, not tortoise or other wildlife habitat condition."

Response:

Range condition is not synonomous with forage condition, or livestock grazing conditions. It is an assessment of the ecological status of an area independent of resource use. Therefore, an area in excellent range condition may not be necessarily in excellent condition for wildlife or livestock. Each site must be evaluated with the desired animal species in mind to determine objectives and management.

58 [Jayne Chavez-Scales]
"BLM pays for the materials for range improvements for the ranchers. What is the annual cost? What do the ranchers pay per acre/head of cattle for grazing on the desert? How much are the fines for overgrazing?"

Response:

Most materials in the East Mojave are provided by San Bernardino County, not the BLM. No breakdown is available for expenditures on range improvements in the Scenic Area. Lessees do not pay by the acre, but by Animal Unit Months (AUM's). One AUM is the amount of forage necessary to feed one cow and calf for one month. The fee is $1.35/AUM, as established by Congress. Depending on the circumstances, trespassers may be charged $7.55, $15.10, or $22.65 per AUM.

Grazing does not need to be eliminated to improve condition. Trend is improving in these areas.

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254 [Elizabeth Ridgely]
"Lower profile troughs should be replaced in concept as guzzlers because larger animals would destroy the former (page 167)."

Response:

Both troughs and guzzlers may be designed to reduce damage. The BLM will coordinate with wildlife interests and grazing lessees as necessary to accomplish this.

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8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"Include the following goal:

1. Phase out grazing in the East Mojave National Scenic Area.

2. Require strict compliance with all provisions of existing grazing leases, and applicable regulations.

3. Review all grazing leases for conformity with this plan.

4. There is a need for more than monitoring. According to Interior department studies, few if any lease holders are required to comply with the conditions of their leases. Trespass is ignored, overstocking is ignored, and late payment is ignored. Management in the East Mojave must include not only monitoring for compliance, but a commitment to hold the lessees to the conditions of their contracts on penalty of forfeiture. In addition, the public needs to be involved in reviewing allotment management plans.

5. At present, these plans are developed by BLM staff which consults with the lessee and then are reviewed by a grazing board consisting of other lease holders. The public seldom if ever has an opportunity to comment on them. This plan needs a provision for more a more aggressive program to gather public input on grazing.

6. According to your own data one of the allotments is in poor condition and nothing is being done to halt grazing on it.

   Significant changes in species diversity, distribution, and populations have taken place in the East Mojave since grazing began. BLM does not seem to have the same commitment to preserving pre-grazing conditions as they do to preserving the remnants of the era when the area was more heavily grazed.

7. The entire paragraph on page 142 which dismisses consideration of eliminating grazing is such a fiction as to boggle the mind. We hardly know where to begin. Why would it take 20 years to phase out existing grazing leases, when each lease is for no more than 10 years? The statement concerning benefits is erroneous, not supported in fact, and not documented in previous records.

8. All grazing adjustments since 1980 have been unsupported increases in allotments. The public pays for the additional developments. The grazing fees do ot cover even the administrative costs of managing the program. The Range Con could be assigned to assist in forage plans and water developments for wildlife and the public would receive a net benefit.

9. The public is not nostalgic about cow dung all over the Kelso Dunes when they're trying to hike to the top, nor when they see cattle in Piute Spring. They are not enamored of cattle when they hit one on Kelbaker Road at night, nor when they trample their campsite. They are not pleased when they see cattle eating the spring wildflower displays.

10. The rusty barbed wire, iron tanks, broken PVC pipe, polluted water and noxious smells are also part of the picture, and we are not nostalgic about any of them. You should consider eliminating grazing from the East Mojave. The public is unaware that most of the grazing rights are held by ONE person. BLM's concern does not appear to be for the natural scenic and cultural resources of the EMNSA, but for the economic self interest of the lessees."

Response:

1. See response to general comments at the beginning of this section.

2. This is being done. Compliance is maintained through use supervision by rangers, staff resource specialists, and even the public (including ranchers).

3. All leases are in conformance with this plan; actions L-1 and L-2 will reduce any possible sources of friction.

4. Neither trespass, overstocking, nor late payment is ignored. Lessees guilty of violating the terms of their leases may be subject to civil and criminal penalties in addition to the possibility of losing their lease. The BLM will continue to assess any violation on a case by case basis.

5. The public may request copies of and comments on AMP's at any time. As action L-1 is implemented, the public will be invited to comment on any significant revisions.

6. Few portions of the East Mojave have any pre-grazing conditions to preserve - grazing was widespread and intense for 70 years before the BLM was created. Over the last 40 years BLM has taken numerous actions to manage grazing, and the vegetative community has markedly recovered.

Admittedly the BLM has not halted grazing on the allotment with poor condition, but actions have been taken to improve the condition of this allotment, which covers a little over 650 acres of public land.

7. Comment noted.

8. Of the two adjustments in size to allotments in the East Mojave since 1980, one was an increase, and one a decrease. Most of the acreage affected lies outside the Scenic Area. Fewer cattle now use the East Mojave than in 1980.

9. See the first two responses in the General Comments for livestock grazing.

10. See the first response in the General Comments for livestock grazing. Sixteen individuals or corporations have a legal interest in these leases.

L-1 Allotment Management Plans

46 [Russ Butcher, NP&CA]
"We favor the revision of allotment management plans regarding impacts that may be occurring to wildlife and wildlife habitat. Expanding the range-monitoring program is excellent."

254 [Elizabeth Ridgely]
"A revision of the AMP's will provide a positive impact to the range program if they are realistic and workable solutions which the grazing lessee can help to implement."

Response: Comments noted.

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8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
The standard AMP format does not address management directions for the East Mojave National Scenic Area. In particular, the AMPs do not address conflicts with recreation, a major component of use in the East Mojave. Our review of East Mojave AMPs did not find any concerns for visual resource management. Most of the concerns addressed in the AMPs are directed to how it is possible to increase the number of cattle on an allotment by changing allocations and designations and by adding water developments and pipelines. No plan that we reviewed indicated any reduction in allotments to protect natural, scenic or cultural resources. The AMP's admitted that the increased allotments would lead to increased loss of cultural resources, and that in most of the areas cultural surveys have not been completed on other than a test plot."

Response:

The intent of an AMP is to document how livestock grazing will be managed within an allotment. The primary focus is range management; other issues are addressed as necessary. Conversely, the East Mojave Plan's focus is on recreation. It touches on other issues, including grazing, as necessary.

Neither type of plan replaces the other. The AMPs will be revised however, both to correct any deficiencies and to include in them actions prescribed by the East Mojave Plan. These plans will compliment each other as well as Habitat Management Plans.

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"These are all fine sounding actions. However, nothing concrete is being proposed. At the minimum the corral in the Kelso Dunes area should be eliminated. In addition, cattle grazing west of Kelbaker Road should cease. There are many reasons for this: the two University [Granites, Sodas] study areas where undisturbed plots are vital, the sensitivity of the Kelso Dunes system to disturbance, the large herd of Big Horn sheep in the Kelso and Old Dad Mountains, and the fact that outside of the Dunes the area is not currently heavily used by cattle anyway. As a special personal note, I find it disgusting to lead small children onto the Dunes and then have to try and find an area for them to play where they won't be rolling around in cow poop."

Response:

Actions that may enhance recreational experiences will be considered as the AMP's are reviewed.

258 [Mary Lou Rosczyk]
"Under Livestock Grazing (p. 90) "current range condition is assessed as fair to good with a stable to improved trend" therefore no changes in use allocations are proposed. However, I feel the BLM should strive to improve range habitat whenever possible. This could be accomplished with no hardship to ranchers by discontinuing the policy of "short-term temporary use authorizations" in high production years."

Response:

Trend has been improving over the last 50 years, most dramatically in the last 12 years. Some allotments are being held significantly below carrying capacity to accomplish this. A change in management is not needed to continue this improvement.

279 [Richard Spotts, Defenders of Wildlife]
"For several years there has been a problem with trespass livestock grazing from a BLM allotment into the Providence Mountains State Recreation Area. While some fencing has been constructed, the problem continues. BLM should candidly concede this problem and explain how it will be resolved in a reasonable period of time. If completion of the fencing is impractical, BLM should consider phasing out this grazing allotment. On a border scale, BLM fails to provide a cumulative assessment of adverse impacts from livestock grazing and associated range improvements throughout the East Mojave. This cumulative review is necessary, particularly since it appears that livestock grazing is becoming a dominant use of public lands in many areas."

Response:

The issue of livestock within the Providence Mountains State Recreation Area is between the State and the rancher. San Bernardino County ordinances place the onus of fencing on the State if they wish to exclude livestock. The partially constructed fence was built by the State without BLM involvement. Contrary to the belief that grazing is becoming a dominant use in the area, livestock use has declined over the last 20 years while recreational use has increased substantially.

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207 [Bob McDowell]
"Unnecessary fencing and structures should be removed. There are literally miles of fences that simply do not belong in EMNSA."

Response:

The need for range improvements will be evaluated as the AMP's are reviewed. Unnecessary improvements without historical value may then be removed.

L-2 Expand Range Monitoring Program

263 [Gerald Scherba, Desert Studies Consortium]
"Given the strong statements in the Management Plan about protecting vegetation and wildlife habitats, I am surprised that each of the 11 AMP's was reviewed and "no changes in use allocation are being proposed". This suggests that there may have been insufficient data on which to base a decision to change or retain the existing levels of grazing. Therefore, I believe it appropriate to include a statement committing the BLM to conduct appropriate studies to assure that the impact of grazing in each of the 11 grazing areas is negligible."

Response:

An in-depth analysis of existing monitoring data will be occurring over the next several years.

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85 [Donald Falk, Desert Survivors]
"The schedule for soil and range studies should be accelerated so that grazing reductions can ensue as soon as possible."

Response: Comment noted.

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285 [Rose Strickland, Sierra Club-Toiyabe Chapter]
"The draft Plan is especially deficient in its proposed grazing management actions. BLM is mandated by federal laws to eliminate livestock overgrazing on the public lands, specifically in FLMPA in 1976. It is totally incomprehensible and inadequate that, 11 years later, the Bureau is proposing a

"soil study" to see if changes may be needed. Over a decade of existing data should be adequate on which to base immediate changes. On-going monitoring studies will indicate whether further changes, if any, are needed. Also, adequate management of wildlife is totally dependent on adequate livestock management. Improvement in wildlife management is sorely neglected in the draft Plan."

254 [Elizabeth Ridgely]
"More monitoring is not needed to prevent overgrazing. The seral stage you would want in order to manage for wildlife and livestock would be good. There would still be a problem with livestock grazing northeast of the Mid Hills campground, but overgrazing on Cima Dome is caused by burros. Granite Mountains and Kelso Dunes had no problem as long as I worked there. If the current range condition is fair to good, and the trend is stable to improved, you should not need more monitoring."

99 [Yitzhak Gilon]
"I do not see how you can arrive at the proper stocking rate without knowing if the best plants are being destroyed and soil movement is observed."

Response:

Over 40 permanent study plots have been in place in the Scenic Area for 10 to 18 years. Additional information has been collected in other parts of the allotments. This information is adequate to determine the vegetative trend. However, and increased number of studies would greatly enhance the ability of the BLM to identify problems, including the amount of use made by burros versus livestock.

L-3 Remove/Repair Abandoned Range Improvements

254 [Elizabeth Ridgely]
"Abandoned range improvement materials sometimes add to the scenic, rustic a/o pastoral appeal of an area... Old corrals, fences, and windmills are as scenic to some as the old barns that are frequently painted."

206 [R.S. MacPherson, CA4WD]
"Livestock grazing— Many of these "improvements are historic in nature and definitely add to the experience of the desert. The knowledge of the hardships experienced by others in the area through observation of the remains adds to the enjoyment and education of the trip. Lets not do this!!!"

175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"MRAN questions the need to remove all nonfunctional water tanks, fences and such. There is a certain rustic appeal of these abandoned range improvements. The presence of a neglected windmill or a long abandoned railroad tie corral adds to the "desert experience," while more modern junk is just that. MRAN would hope that the BLM would approach this clean up effort with sufficient flexibility to accomplish the task while maintaining historical continuity."

58 [Jayne Chavez-Scales, California Turtle & Tortoise Club]
"Who pays the $5,100 for the removal of range improvements? I believe the ranchers should pay for this costly removal."

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"Action L-3, in particular is appreciated. Perhaps long term lease holders should be required to pitch in and help clean up their own messes."

Response:

Abandoned range improvements and materials will be evaluated for scenic and historical properties before a decision is made to remove them. Potential safety hazards may also be modified. It is anticipated that work will be done through a combined effort by the BLM, grazing lessees, and volunteers. Some ranchers have already begun to remove abandoned materials on their own initiative.

M. Minerals

Nearly every commenter made some reference to mining, with most asking BLM to consider phasing this activity out of the Scenic Area. Reasons cited were unacceptable impacts to visual quality, threats to the area's ecosystems, and the "illegitimacy" of many mining operations or doubts about the actual mineral value of the region's deposits. The following excerpts give the full range of opinion received on this section of the draft plan.

Comments dealing with the issue of mineral withdrawals are responded to above (actions A-5 through A-7).

Mining Program Objectives

85 [Donald Falk, Desert Survivors]
"A. BLM's policy of encouraging as much mineral development as possible within the EMNSA undercuts almost every protective element of the Draft Plan.
B. Sand and gravel extraction is not appropriate within the EMNSA.
C. BLM should conduct a validity examination of all mining claims in the EMNSA.
D. The proposed additional mineral withdrawals are a first step which should be followed by withdrawing the rest of the EMNSA from mineral exploration.
E. Leaving the proposed withdrawals open to mineral leasing seriously undercuts the protective aspects of the withdrawals. The lands should be withdrawn from leasing as well."

207 [Bob McDowell]
"All oil and gas leases should be cancelled. No marketable quantities of these products has ever been found in EMNSA, and they have the potential to cause undue harm. They are not an appropriate activity in EMNSA."

175 [Robert Maichle, MRAN]
"MRAN questions whether we need to encourage mineral development. MRAN agrees that the BLM should not hinder mineral production where appropriate, but cannot agree that we should "encourage mineral development in as many areas as possible..." as stated in the objectives."

7 [Scott Anderson]
"Your 'management objectives' on page 25 are...unacceptable. Encourage mineral development? In as many areas as possible? I believe that your management objective for mineral development on page 25 and your proposed management on page 93 should be identical to those of the National Park Service. There should be no mining. (Your management philosophy is to "retain the area's natural scenic qualities.") On a limited scope, you should never allow mining in an ACEC, else why bother providing ACEC status? (Your decision allowing Amselco [New Colosseum Mine] to proceed in and around the Clark Mountain ACEC and Outstanding Natural Area should be reversed.)"

Response:

The first comment brings out most of the key points made by other commenters on this section of the draft plan.

Point A: The objectives for minerals has been revised to more accurately reflect Federal law and policy. As written in the draft plan, the objective is not consistent with national policy. The mining law was amended by Section 302 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act to prevent undue and unnecessary degradation to the public lands, and by Section 603 to prevent impairment to Wilderness Study Areas. The revised objective now states, "Allow mineral development consistent with the principles developed in the National Mineral Policy and Development Act of 1970, and in a manner to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of public lands."

Point B: BLM concurs; see below for additional comments and a more detailed response.

Point C: The issue of validity examinations are discussed below.

Point D: With laws now in place, BLM has statutory authority to require reclamation and performance bonds, eliminating the need for wholesale mineral withdrawals to protect resources. Withdrawals are considered only in cases where the resource's uniqueness or susceptibility to impact is great enough to warrant the action. Many mining operations have been completed in the East Mojave over the past six years, and have been successfully reclaimed to meet interim management guidelines for wilderness study areas or class L guidelines. See comments/responses for actions A-5 to A-7.

Point E: BLM has discretionary authority for mineral leasing activities. In other words, we can say "no" if an environmental review indicates that impacts would be unacceptably high to other resources. In the case of locatable mining claims (such as the New Colosseum gold mine), Federal law does not grant BLM discretionary authority, meaning we must approve the Plan of Operation or Notice. Due to this difference in law, there is no need for withdrawals from mineral leasing activity.

The issue of mineral leasing in the East Mojave will be deferred until 1989, when a Desert Plan Amendment will be considered for oil and gas leasing desert-wide. For the East Mojave, this will be designed to conform to objectives of the Scenic Area Plan. It will consider the option of no mineral leasing where environmental concerns warrant such a restriction, and propose guidelines for lease exploration where such activity will be allowed.

The issue of mining in ACECs was examined during the preparation of each ACEC plan. Of the six Scenic Area ACECs, four contained recommendations for mineral withdrawals in areas of particular resource sensitivity. Critical resources are not evenly distributed throughout an ACEC, therefore complete mineral withdrawals are not usually justifiable. The ACEC program was also not intended to identify areas where no use could take place: they are areas with identified use-resource conflicts where intensive management is needed. There are several techniques that can be used to protect resources other than complete closure, including seasonal closures, signing, relocation of uses within a small area, or the simple expedient of "hiding" a resource.

142 [Frederick Johnson, Inyo Multiple-Use Coalition]
"Approved exploration and mineral study by companies and individuals ensures that the taxpayer will not shoulder all the financial burden of these costly studies. The mining community is very environmentally sensitive and will work with the BLM to realize the objectives of the Scenic Area; therefore, it is not necessary to begin the planning and management of the East Mojave by unduly and unnecessarily constraining exploration for minerals in the Scenic Area (page 41-48 and table page 49). Potential compatibility problems should be dealt with as they arise because there will be multiple interests involved in working toward correctly balanced solutions."

Response:

BLM acknowledges that the mineral industry has indeed recognized the need for additional efforts in the East Mojave to minimize mining related impacts, and has worked closely with Needles Resource Area staff to develop adequate reclamation plans. The mineral withdrawals discussed on pages 41-49 of the draft plan will be reviewed in detail when mineral reports/environmental assessments are prepared for each proposal. They are not being proposed to "unduly and unnecessarily constrain exploration for minerals," but in recognition of the value of competing resources in the same areas where mineralization has occurred. Most compatibility problems can be addressed in the normal Plan of Operation review process; we are acknowledging that this process sometimes may not be sufficient in specific areas of the East Mojave to meet our management objectives.

Mineral potential

47 [George Byers, Santa Fe-Pacific Minerals Corporation]
"Regarding the EMNSA draft Plan itself, Santa Fe Pacific, as a mining company, is concerned with the extent of the mineral withdrawals, access closures, and increased use limitations which have been proposed for the EMNSA. Another concern is that the draft Plan appears to imply that the mineral wealth in the EMNSA has been depleted. This just isn't so. In 1980 some 5,000 ounces of gold were produced in the California Desert, and this total is expected to increase by the end of 1998 to some 300,000 ounces. The mineral potential of the California Desert, including the EMNSA, is substantial and largely untapped. To quote BLM's Newsbeat (September 1987), 'The California Desert is one of the most diverse geologic and mineralized regions in the world...The desert is also thought to hold vast undiscovered mineral deposits, as well as deposits that remain undeveloped today only for economic or technologic reasons.'"

11 [Orlo Anderson, Kaiser Steel]
"In reviewing Table 3-7...one would expect to find a comprehensive listing of mineral occurrences developed, at least, from a review of the numerous government publications which describe the geology and mining ;history of the Area. Notably absent from that table is any mention of the occurrence of iron ore in the northern Providence Mountains..., [or] the occurrence of cement-grade limestone in the northern Providence Mountains as well."

324 [H.G. Wilshire]
"The source of information for mineral potential assessment is not clear, and,

because no distinction is made between deposits of local and national interest, the information is essentially useless and irrelevant. Certainly there are no grounds for treating mining and exploration as nationally needed activities in EMNSA because the boundaries are already gerrymandered to exclude the only nationally significant mineral deposit in the area--rare earths in the Mtn. Pass District."

181 [William Matlock, Goldfields Mining Corporation]
"It should be noted that the CDCA Plan (1980) classifies the Castle Mountain property as a montmorillonite resource (Map No. 11 - Economic Mineral Resources) with no mention of its gold resources (Viceroy recently announced 1.5+ million ounces of gold reserves). This only serves to illustrate how little the BLM and industry know about the gold potential of this region. What we do know is that the area has uniquely high potential for gold and rare earth deposits within the Mojave Desert and the CDCA."

Response:

BLM is quite aware that, concerning our ability to know where economic mineral deposits are located, "the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence." Table 3-7, derived from BLM Desert Plan studies and State surveys, was included to give the reviewer some inkling of the known mineral deposits found within the East Mojave, and was not intended to give the false impression that BLM and the mining industry know what exactly is out there. The table has been revised to include data submitted by commenters. BLM also did not intend to give the impression that mining in the East Mojave is near its end. There is every indication that the opposite is true, that mining activity just getting started in the area will far exceed the level of activity which occurred at the turn of the century and into the 1920s.

Mining reclamation

107 [Wayne Guerrini]
"Mention of new mining regulations were made, (43 CFR 3800), without really telling me the significance of these new regulations (page 41)."

213 [William Neill, Desert Protective Council]
"On the lands remaining open to mining, we believe that the greater danger to the landscape is not from extraction of economic deposits, but from "low-tech" prospecting--such as cutting roads and trenches and digging adits. We are depending on the performance bond requirements to curtail this activity where it has no geological merit, and to ensure restoration of the land where mining interests are valid."

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"It is precisely because the public does NOT want to see mining continue as it has that this area was designated a National Scenic Area. The plan totally misses the point of properly managing mining. Funding to review plans of operation for consistency and to mitigate impact should be provided, as well as funds for monitoring adherence to plans of operation on current operations."

Response:

The 43 CFR 3800 surface mining regulations are significant sinces they give BLM the authority to prevent undue and unnecessary degradation of the public lands, require reclamation from mine operators, and allow BLM to ask for performance bonds. No planned actions for mining reclamation were proposed in the draft Scenic Area plan because existing regulations and policies are adequate. However, additional funding will be requested in order that sufficient compliance checks can be made on approved operations. With adequate bonding and compliance checks, experience has shown that mined areas can be properly reclaimed.

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134 [Thomas Jackson]
"First let me state that I realize that mining laws are over 100 years old. I also understand that there is some obscure national need for minerals. But I do not understand any system of government that will allow an individual or corporation to go into an area, rape mountains and valleys of any scenic qualities whatsoever only to pack up and leave when all the investment capitol is used up producing only a disheveled countryside. As a US citizen and a taxpayer and therefore part owner of this public land, I strongly resent the manner in which MY public lands are being managed regarding miners.

258 [Mary Lou Rosczyk]
"...there is one serious flaw which needs to be addressed: large companies doing mining work have adopted the policy of restricting their disturbance area per site to less than five acres but developing many sites. This relieves them of posting a performance bond for reclamation. This policy should be changed so that the five acre limit applies to an entity (person, corporation, etc.) per given length of time."

5 [Harriet Allen]
"Add M-2 Determine for each mine on what date the Surface Mining Rehabilitation Act is triggered. "Mining" could be continued for decades. Add M-3 Add areas under five acres for recreational mining and rockhounding. I refer to the mess in Johnson Valley where cycad fossils were torn from the ground with power equipment. This was less than five acres."

15 [Walter Barbuck]
"Mines are not worked forever. Some miners don't believe in cleaning up an area after they have trashed it. Does the reclamation bond mentioned on page 28 (limited use) cover the entire cost of cleaning up an area? Since this doesn't apply to mining operations of five acres or less isn't it possible to immediately change all lands designated "moderate" to "limited use"...?

Response:

All but 120,000 acres in the East Mojave require the filing of a plan of operation for mining activity regardless of the acreage involved. Action A-1 proposes a Desert Plan amendment to change the 120,000 acres of "moderate use" lands to "limited use," in part to allow more BLM control over surface disturbing actions such as mining. To date, there have been no incidents in the East Mojave where miners have asttempted to thwart reclamation requirements by filing notices or plans for several operations which are really part of a larger effort. The operator would only be creating more paperwork for himself by filing several plans where one would suffice, because reclamation is required as much on operations disturbing 1/2 acre as on those disturbing large areas.

The 43 CFR 3800 regulations require miners to state the period of operations, which means the date they plan to start and end their work. An operator may modify his plan if he requires more or less time for his work. The regulations contain provisions for limited reclamation work during extended periods of non-operation. Recreational mining and rockhounding activities require BLM approval when mechanized equipment is used, or when the planned work goes beyond "casual use."

Reclamation bonds are required for most mining operations in the East Mojave. The amount of the bond is the estimated cost to BLM for contracting the reclamation work through private companies.

Validity exams

249 [Linda Redman]
"I oppose [the use of] public lands for speculative mining. Mining scars including road building and earth moving destroy the value of the natural landscape and threaten the ecosystem. I favor the withdrawal of all of the 1.5 million acres (the Mojave National Park proposal) from mineral entry, and I urge the BLM to require validity examinations for all mining claims until they can be totally eliminated by an act of Congress."

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"While on the subject of minerals, we note that there are over 10,000 mining claims in the EMNSA...We wonder why the document does not refer to the idea of determining claim validity--particularly within areas of high scenic, ecological, cultural, or recreational sensitivity. Is BLM already engaged in a program of determining claim validity? If not, we urge that such a program become part of the EMNSA management plan. This kind of validity determination has been extremely helpful for the minerals management program at Death Valley National Monument, and should prove equally successful and helpful in the East Mojave NSA."

113 [Keith Harris]
"First, I request you reconsider the ease with which your agency allows "speculative mining" claims. This sort of exploration results in destructive road building, bulldozing, and unproductive earth moving. Before you grant exploratory rights, it would be nice if you could initiate some process by which mining claims could be pre-evaluated."

207 [Bob McDowell]
"...the current system leads to tremendous abuses such as recreational bulldozing, fraudulent promotion schemes, and unnecessary excavations. The BLM should perform a validity study on ;those remaining claims. they should cancel invalid claims, explore ;the possibility of acquiring valid claims of little or no mineral potential, and acquiring those patented claims which are ;not producing any mineral commodities. All claims which are legally deficient

according to FLPMA should be cancelled or invalidated. Those claims that remain after these cancellations or acquisitions should have to prove that a diligent effort is being made to produce mineral commodities, and that there is a realistic potential to extract useful minerals in marketable quantities. The exception to this is the [unnecessary] production of sand and gravel"

Response:

The mining laws administered by BLM do not distinguish between "speculative" mining and "legitimate" mining. Mineral exploration is by necessity a speculative venture, since its purpose is to discover whether suspected mineral resources are economically recoverable. A determination of validity by BLM at this stage of development would require the agency to fund mineral exploration activities in order to prove the economic value of the claimed ore body. Also, exploration operations such as core drilling or trenching can often be reclaimed to acceptable standards since the amount of surface disturbance is not great. Operations which are intended to commercially extract ores are a different matter, since large scale impacts are likely and effective reclamation becomes more difficult and expensive.

Validity exams would be worthwhile at this stage, particularly if the claims being developed are in areas with significant competing resources. The final Scenic Area plan addresses this issue by calling for validity exams in areas which have been withdrawn from mineral entry after the claim had been established ("grandfathered" claims), or when a patent application has been filed which could remove the property from federal ownership.

The issue of unnecessary excavations or road building on "fraudulent" or "speculative" claims is a real one. The Needles Resource Area works with mining operators or claimants to encourage exploration in phases, thereby reducing initial levels of surface disturbance until the operator knows there is enough ore to merit additional exploration work.

Saleable Minerals (Sand & Gravel)

207 [Bob McDowell]
"Since there are numerous sand and gravel operations, and plenty of reserves within the California Desert and elsewhere, all sand-gravel operations should cease within EMNSA. Those operations are too massive and damaging to be allowed to continue."

263 [Gerald Scherba, Desert Studies Consortium]
"Can the sale of common minerals, such as sand, gravel and cinders, be discontinued within the Scenic Area? They are abundant and relatively inexpensive and elimination of their extraction would help preserve natural resources, without impinging on the extraction of essential minerals."

24 [Eleanor Berke]
"Concerning the BLM Plan for the East Mojave National Scenic Area, I believe that the Cinder Cone Area should not be mined for cinders. In fact, I would like to see the road scars, already existing on some cones, removed although I am not sure how this could be done."

Response:

The final plan addresses the issues raised in these comments by proposing strict limits on the extraction of sand, gravel and cinders. BLM will only allow the taking of saleable materials for local agency needs such as County road maintenance. The two existing cinder mining operations in the Cinder Cones area will be allowed to continue as "grandfathered" operations.

N. Energy Production and Utility Corridors

85 [Donald Falk, Desert Survivors]
"Contingent Utility Corridor W should be rerouted outside the EMNSA. The proposals to reroute existing corridors should be pursued."

138 [Bruce Jensen]
"In addition, the Draft Plan and Proposed Action should be amended to expressly oppose any utility corridor through Cima Dome and the Devil's Playground. The Desert Plan's contingent utility corridor, "Corridor W," could certainly become a future controversy in the East Mojave and a major intrusion to its scenic integrity. At minimum, this plan should recommend that the Desert Plan be amended to delete Corridor W."

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"However, Contingent Corridor W should also be removed from consideration for any further development. This Corridor swings through the heart of the East Mojave, and should not ever again witness destructive intrusions."

Response:

BLM will propose a Desert Plan Amendment to eliminate Contingent Corridor W, thereby allowing a full public review of the proposal in a Desert-wide context. The contingent corridor was designated by the Desert Plan in 1980.

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8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"It would be appropriate for BLM to indicate how it intends to manage the utility corridors and lines which cross the Scenic Area. What will the policy be on upgrading existing lines? What happens if a line is abandoned? Will electrical transmission lines be allowed over pipeline corridors? What is the policy on microwave facilities inside the Scenic Area? These issues should be addressed in this plan."

48 [Lisa Cagnolatti, Southern California Gas Company]
"The Desert Plan established "contingent corridors" that can be developed further. One of SoCalGas Company's natural gas pipelines runs directly through the Scenic Area and is not in any utility corridor. As we have stated before, it is necessary that we have right-of-way and right-of-use for this natural gas pipline and as operating conditions dictate, the abiltiy to expand our facilities."

Response:

Normal maintenance, including replacement, of utility lines within an existing right-of-way is allowed. Substantial deviations from the rights granted would require an amendment to the right-of-way grant, and possibly a Desert Plan Amendment when the right-of-way is not within a utility corridor. An example of a substantial deviation would be upgrading an electrical transmission line from single pole to double pole or steel tower, or rerouting a gas pipeline through previously undisturbed areas. Utility corridors were not designated for specific types of lines, therefore many already contain electric transmission lines, gas or oil pipelines, or communication cables. Any requests for "substantial deviations" on utility lines in the East Mojave would be provided a thorough environmental analysis and public review.

When lines are no longer needed, a right-of-way holder may file for relinquishment. Above ground facilities are removed, and the site(s) reclaimed to BLM's specifications. Performance bonds are required for large projects to ensure reclamation funding is available.

BLM discourages the siting of non-mandated microwave sites within the East Mojave and requires visual mitigation of those sites which are mandated by law (ie., public health and safety, or by order of the Public Utilities Commission).

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254 [Elizabeth Ridgely]
"While underground placement of distribution lines has less long-term visual impacts, it has more long-term impacts on the soil--the base for all resources. This type of disturbance should require recontouring and reseeding."

218 [Robert Norris, UC Santa Barbara]
"I'd like to see pressure applied to the utility companys to underground their lines on some sort of systematic basis. My impression is that this is relatively easy and cost-effective for the telephone lines, but more of a problem for electric lines. But these lines are one of the main eyesores in the desert."

Response:

Burial of distribution lines is encouraged in "limited" use areas to reduce visual impacts, but other factors are also weighed, such as impacts to soils, habitat, or cultural resources. Costs of burial are significantly greater than overhead placement, and must be considered in relation to the significance of the viewshed to be protected, or other resources.

218

O. Fire Management

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCROC]
"We support all efforts to modernize the BLM's fire management policy to reflect current knowledge of the role of fire in natural systems. However, the goal here is too weak. a Fire Management plan must be prepared and an extensive public education program undertaken so the public and staff understand the new framework for fire management. Prescribed burns, or allowing natural fires to burn requires detailed planning, not just "flexibility," as it is characterized on page 140.

What a relief that at least in the EMNSA that BLM is finally beginning to adopt a policy that was generally recognized as the preferred management style more than a decade ago. However, the funding is inadequate to develop a fire management plan, and does not cover expenses associated with implementation. Prescribed burns are highly labor intensive to plan and carry out, and thus expensive as well."

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"This "limited suppression" policy sounds excellent. However, prescribed burning should never be used in the Scenic Area merely as a tool for increasing annual grasses to benefit cattle."

27 [Howard Blair]
"I support full suppression fire fighting to save our pinon and juniper tree stands."

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"We favor a "limited" fire suppression plan to permit flexibility. Not only is it unnecessary to suppress all fires; it is sometimes inappropriate to do so. Furthermore, as occurs in other BLM districts, in national forests, and many national park system units, there should be provisions in the East Mojave plan (as is proposed) for prescription burning where needed to reduce fuel overloading and carefully reintroduce fire into the ecosystem."

202 [Stanley Murphy]
"I disagree with your fire management plan. I do not see how you justify nine firefighting personnel for 40-50 fires a year. Since you say most fires are caused by lightning, they should be allowed to burn."

82 [Marion Ely III]
"Although lightning sets the majority of fires, with the creation of wilderness areas and the undoubted increase in use they will see with developed trails, toilet paper may become a major contributor to the problem. What I of course refer to is the misguided practice of burning toilet paper after use rather than burying it and adding to the compost of the land."

Response:

The Plan incorrectly implies that the entire Scenic Area will be covered by a "limited suppression" policy, however, that is not BLM's intent. Instead, the Scenic Area will be divided into areas requiring "full suppression," areas requiring "limited suppression," and possibly even "let burn" areas. As stated on page 94 of the Plan, the fire management plan will take into account sensitive resources, private lands, structures, excessive fuel load areas, as well as other considerations. The cost figure for implementation reflects only the labor cost to collate data and write the plan. Any prescribed burns which may occur will be planned and implemented with funds from the benefitting subactivity (such as presuppression, grazing, or recreation). The Plan does not make any claims as to what the staffing level for Hole-in-the-Wall fire station will be, however, it does state the current staffing levels. It stands to reason, however, that a comprehensive fire management plan will require some level of fire fighting personnel to be stationed in the Scenic Area. The Plan neither states nor implies that prescribed burning will be used "merely as a tool for increasing annual grasses to benefit cattle." Individual actions, such as how best to handle the toilet paper issue, will be addressed in the fire management plan. The Plan specifically states on page 94 that "an aggressive fire prevention program" will be developed.

P. Monitoring

5 [Harriet Allen]
"I support as a minimum, though question whether P-3 should also include field-use counts. Add P-6: Base-line data from the inventory phase on should be made available to the public in its complete and unedited form. A central location and reasonable business hours should be observed."

46 [Russell Butcher, NP&CA]
"We emphatically agree that meaningful increases in monitoring in virtually all aspects of management are essential to the ultimate success of the plan. There is no other way in which it can be judged whether the plan is successful or not, whether use growth projections have been accurate or not, etc. Consequently, while short-term plan implementation requires adequate funding, so also must longer-term monitoring -- to adequately enable BLM to "keep its finger on the pulse.""

58 [Jayne Chavez-Scales, California Turtle & Tortoise Club]
"Change inspections from "regularly" to another interval (daily, weekly, etc.). Be specific. P-5 Change intervals to annually. Look for another funding revenue to offset the high cost ($55,200). Or seek another bid."

63 [Frank Cohen]
"I should think that the only way the area can be adequately protected - both resources and visitors, is by a much greater staff for policing. In almost all cases where public resources lay unprotected, vandalism, disregard of rules, and sometimes even violence becomes an unacceptable cost. I am certainly not in favor of a police state in our open free scenic and park areas, but I am very much in favor of "showing the flag." It will take more than four rangers - especially on weekends and holidays."

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"We approve of the monitoring program with modifications as suggested in the specific sections. How will the color photos be used? What equipment will be purchased? Helicopters, tractors, patrol vehicles?"

251 [Robert & Jennifer Reynolds]
"Increased monitoring of wilderness, grazing, hunting seasons, campgrounds, and any other patrol-related BLM duties will have a positive effect upon the protection and safety of all resources, regardless of the specific monitoring targets. On our latest trip to the area (August/September 1987) we encountered 3 BLM Rangers adn 1 Fish and Game warden in the New Yorks, and 1 BLM grazing monitor near Halloran Summit. This is a marked increase of personnel over what we have observed over several years of visiting, and we hope it is a trend."

Response:

A wide range of comments were received on the subject of monitoring which also relate to enforcement and patrol efforts. Comments on enforcement are dealt with separately in the following section.

Base line studies on resources/resource conditions are already available for public inspection at the Desert District Office in Riverside. Studies, inventories, and surveys - mostly developed for the Desert Plan effort -

provide a substantial amount of information about the East Mojave. One of the substantial benefits of Action P-2 will be the compilation of this data into mapable units for the Geographic Information System. This information would be available for public inspection at BLM's Needles and Riverside offices.

Color aerial photos are useful tools to detect changes in land use patterns on a broad scale that would perhaps go unnoticed if monitoring was done only on the ground. Five year intervals are standard due in part to the high costs, particularly for an area as large as the East Mojave; but also from the practical point that changes in landscape over a five year period would be more readily apparent than if recorded at shorter intervals. The aerial photos are also useful since they can be studied in detail, particularly if ground or air monitoring identifies potential problem areas. The photos are also consulted during environmental reviews of BLM or privately proposed projects.

Part 3: Affected Environment

Several comments/responses on this section of the draft Plan have been addressed under the appropriate headings in Part 2, Management Action.

Part 4: Implementation

64 [Philippe Cohen, Granite Mountain Natural Reserve]
"The cost and implementation schedule is weak and difficult to follow. As discussed earlier, trying to relate the implementation schedule with the particular elements of the plan is almost impossible. It is stated that the costs are considered feasible within the current budget climate. On what grounds? All this needs to be spelled out and broken down. It is stated that a "realignment of overall priorities may be required," but it is not clear how such decisions will be made and how budgetary constraints will influence this process...

Without such clarification, it is impossible to determine how the plan's effectiveness will be impacted at different levels of support. At the same time, if the resources and support needed for implementing the plan are not forthcoming, some prioritization of the plan's various elements will be needed. Unless costs and staffing requirements are tied to specific elements of the plan, it will be very difficult to set such priorities."

263 [Gerald Scherba, Desert Studies Consortium]
"Implementation of the Management Plan is contingent on the addition of more than 20 new staff positions. If all of these positions do not become available, is there a contingency plan, or a statement of priorities for implementation of the Management Plan. Could it be included in the [final] Plan?"

Response:

Wording has been added to Part 4 concerning priorities for funding of the actions proposed in the Management Plan, and the Cost and Implementation Schedule corrected to eliminate errors and inconsistencies. A detailed prioritization for funding purposes is done annually during preparation of budget proposals. To provide such a level of detail now would be counter productive--priorities will vary year to year, and will be established to meet on-the-ground needs which can not be predicted more than one to three years in advance. BLM will provide information on its priorities for management of the East Mojave annually in the proposed "State of the Scenic Area" report (action P-1).

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14 [Mrs. Frederick Bacher, Jr.]
"We are deeply concerned regarding BLM's East Mojave National Scenic Area plan. In it we find no guarantee of funding or any commitment on the part of BLM to implement the plan."

Response:

Since the East Mojave's designation as a National Scenic Area in 1980, BLM has committed a significant proportion of Needles Resource Area staff time and funding to this region, maintaining these levels through budget cuts at the expense of funding for other areas in the California Desert. As to the future, for the past two years the East Mojave has been BLM California's highest priority special management area in the State, and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

Enforcement

107 [Wayne Guerrini]
"I feel more BLM rangers are required to patrol the East Mojave, and would certainly support legislation to increase BLM presence in this unique [area]."

254 [Elizabeth Ridgely]
"The proposed staff increase is exorbitant and unnecessary."

64 [Philippe Cohen, Granite Mountain Natural Reserve]
"It is important to recognize that while the recreation management proposals are good ones, the real issue is one of enforcement. If there is inadequate personnel to enforce current restrictions, it will be even more difficult with additional restrictions. It is important that new restrictions and management proposals not be used to hide inadequate personnel."

83 [Henry Ervin]
"My major concern, however, centers around enforcement of the myriad rules which the plan outlines. Voluntary compliance by desert recreation groups has usually been miserable in my experience. How will the Bureau enforce its regulations? Are 27 total new positions really adequate even if all were desperately needed patrol rangers? I see a great need for strict enforcement of the new rules by sufficient numbers of well-equipped patrol rangers."

10 [E.N. Anderson]
"I am strongly for "wise use" as opposed to "preservation," and had hoped that some kind of plan might be worked out that would allow some mining, grazing, etc. Unfortunately the BLM seems unable to control literally insane destruction: off-road vehicle use that irrevocably destroys, for all time, grazing and forestry and other uses for a few minutes' pleasure. I support motorcycle and four-wheel vehicle recreation; that isn't the problem. The problem is destructive use by anyone for any reason. There is simply no way the desert can bear up under current pressures of off-road recreation, grazing (locally), illegal plant collecting, etc. I feel that National Park status would provide some protection. Any plan that does not involve active, intensive enforcement of laws by qualified rangers, and enforcement of laws that actually protect resources (for future use or simply for enjoyment), is not worthy of any consideration."

211 [Deral McKee]
"Before you implement any stage of your plan you should hire sufficient

personnel to enforce the laws that are on the books now. The trash and littering problems are ever increasing. The Utah Forest Service does a very commendable job controlling this problem in the Dixie National Forest. They visit out-of-area campsites and post notices as to the laws -- and where and how to dispose of trash. Why can't the Rangers carry on this type of program?"

128 [Vicky Hoover, Sierra Club-San Francisco Bay Chapter]
"Stricter enforcement against general unauthorized use is required, and not found in [the] plan or EA. Cost considerations may be important in this, but the significance of the area merits close attention to enforcement."

279 [Richard Spotts, Defenders of Wildlife]
"An overriding concern is the question of BLM's ability to adequately enforce its management commitments. It sometimes appears that there is a widening credibility gap between management actions on paper and BLM's actual ability to ensure "on the ground" enforcement. These problems should be honestly addressed. Of course, we support and appreciate efforts to increase BLM's staff and enforcement capabilities. For example, we are pleased to learn that Congress is considering the addition of more than 20 BLM desert rangers in Southern California. We hope that this staff increase is approved."

21 [Dana Bell, Thomas Getzfrid, AMA-District 37]
"District 37 encourages the concept of ranger presence assisted by a "Trespass Task Force" to protect Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, ensure compliance with Area policies and prevent conflict between interest groups."

323 [James Williams, Specialty Vehicle Institute of America]
"SVIA endorses the use of a "special enforcement" team in the East Mojave if the need arises. Similar programs are in effect in Washington State and have ;been found effective in controlling ;use and gaining compliance among public land users."

82 [Marion Ely III]
"Increased enforcement...Admittedly some measure of this needs to occur and since the major threats appear in those areas which are the most popular, [they] can be more easily treated. The specter of "Big Brother is watching YOU" is implicit in the discussions of overflights, et cetera...Hogwash. From those alleged abuses that I have heard of, a minority of them have been serious; the bulk of these incidents have been ballooned and extrapolated out of context for publicity purposes. Conversely, there are numerous incidents circulating [of] alleged abuses suffered in the name of 'enforcement' which, if the trend continues, will lead to some serious confrontations..."

Response:

Over the years, the BLM has established a set of regulations published yearly in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). These regulations provide for the management and protection of public lands, addressing such uses as off road vehicles, mining, grazing and rights-of-way. They also provide for the protection and safety of public land users. These regulations carry civil or criminal penalties or both, depending upon the regulation involved, and are reviewed, added to and refined yearly. The East Mojave Plan has identified critical areas where new regulations will be written and included in the 43 CFR to provide better management, resource protection, and visitor safety. But a regulation (as pointed out by several commenters) is useless unless there are resources to educate the public land user, and a commitment of manpower to enforce the regulation. One of the first priorities of the Needles Resource Area has been to add four new ranger positions--for a total of seven--to the Area staff by 1989. To provide efficient coverage, three of the rangers will be headquartered in strategic locations throughout the Scenic Area. Additional enforcement staffing will be added as the need arises and as funding is available.

Part 5: Environmantal Assessment

The majority of comments concerning the Environmental Assessment (EA) dealt with the range of alternatives. A selection of statements and BLM's response is followed by comments we received on specific issues addressed by the EA, such as Impacts on Recreation, or Mineral Development.

Range of Alternatives

273 [Scott Simons, Sierra Club-Mojave Group]
"Finally, there is the matter of BLM's Proposed Action and Alternatives. Basically, the alternatives are take it or leave it. That's no real alternative, since everyone agrees the current situation needs improving. Real alternatives exist.

First, I see no mention by BLM of what might happen if the funding called for by this plan does not occur. A low funding alternative will probably be required by the Bureau, not to satisfy Sierra Club, but to deal with a very likely possibility. What will happen to your fine planning if the money does not flow as you hope?

Second, a respectable segment of the community [a U.S. Senator and the majority of the California Congressional Delegation!] has proposed that Scenic Area jurisdiction be transferred within the Department of the Interior to the National Park Service. This is a reasonable alternative, and it too has a good chance of becoming reality. The Bureau should have offered this alternative as well.

Third, a strong preservationist alternative that would consider all the options discussed on pages 142 and 143 should have been offered.

The East Mojave is a special area, and one deserving of more park-like management. Taken together, the actions dropped from further analysis [pages 142-143] are precisely the additional management actions needed to preserve the integrity of EMNSA."

283 [Glenn Stewart, Desert Tortoise Council]
"We do not think that Alternative Actions (listed on pages 142 and 143) were adequately evaluated. We are specifically interested in the alternatives involving: (1) development of a leasing system for all minerals in the East Mojave, (2) sharp curtailment or elimination of grazing over a several year period, and (3) elimination of all shooting not associated with hunting of upland game birds and deer (no hunting of rabbits). We believe that all these alternatives should have been pursued in some depth. If the BLM wishes to maintain healthy, stable tortoise populations in the East Mojave Scenic Area, more actions of this type must be taken in prime tortoise habitat."

205 [Donald Myers]
"I wish to express my support for the East Mojave National Scenic Area being developed into a National Park.

With the increased population of California, it seems evident that a larger portion of state and federal land should be set aside for future generations of Americans.

The Bureau of Land Management has been doing an excellent job of protecting the land in question. But as the years go by, the pressures of modern civilization will continue to impact the area beyond that which may become uncontrollable. National Park status may not solve all the problems but it will offer the protection of the Department of Interior."

67 [Patrick Colgan, Sierra Club-San Francisco Bay Chapter]
"Having studied the draft plan documents, we are concerned that so few alternatives were presented; only two — of which one is merely a continuation of present levels of action (Alternative B) and your Alternative A, Proposed Action; this does offer some commendable improvements in your management policies, which we are happy to see.

It is disappointing that the range of alternatives is so extraordinarily limited. Considering all the recent concern over establishing a national park in this area, anyone familiar with the issues involved finds its incredible that you have not even mentioned — much less adequately addressed — the obvious alternative for a Mojave National Park. Unfortunately, your careful efforts to ignore what the Congress of the United States is considering as an alternative for the EMNSA — establishment of Mojave National Park — will not prove to be in the best interest of your agency, the EMNSA itself, or the people of California and the U.S.. Instead, I fear the result will be to diminish credibility and plausibility of your efforts, unless the final document does indeed make up for the draft omission by including a reasonable park alternative."

8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"The draft plan and its environmental assessment is inadequate. It does not present the full range of alternatives which should be presented as part of an Environmental Impact Statement. A simple "all or nothing" in not adequate for an area of 1.5 million acres as required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

One of the alternatives which should have been analyzed is the assignment of the management to a different agency. Although BLM does not favor this alternative, it has been suggested many times. This would have been an appropriate time to consider the issue.

The no-action alternative was not fully described, nor was its impact fully assessed, making the other alternative appear to be ideal. No-action management is a reversion to the existing management for the area under the Desert Plan. The Desert Plan calls for many of the same actions, if properly implemented, blurring the difference between the two. Funding is critical in either case.

We believe a full EIS on an appropriate range of alternative for the EMNSA is required, and trust that BLM will not attempt to conclude that there is "no significant impact" on a proposal that covers 1,500,000 acres of glorious scenery.

As the BLM is aware, the Sierra Club has supported National Park designation for the East Mojave for many years. We consider this area to be very important and have given a great deal of time to preparing these comments. We hope they will be helpful in determining a management plan which will protect the extremely valuable public resource. As the plan stands now, we find it inappropriate for the first BLM National Scenic Area."

264 [Patricia Schifferle, Wilderness Society]
"The Wilderness Society appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft East Mojave National Scenic Area Plan. In general, we find the plan fails to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. Clearly the plan must in accordance with the act analyze a full range of alternative management schemes for the area and develop relevant information so that an informed decision can be obtained. The scoping for the present document is limited and woefully inadequate.

The plan fails to consider the impacts from continued commercial and private harvesting of plants in the EMNSA, including wood collecting. Additionally, the plan fails to consider and provide alternatives to protect the diversity of plant life in the desert from the intrusion of roads, mining, grazing, and increased recreational use.

The plan fails to consider the full range of alternatives and impacts from continued grazing in the East Mojave Scenic Area. There is virtually no enforcement plan provided. The impacts from continued grazing on vegetation and habitat, especially for endangered species, was not considered adequately in the plan. Most of the grazing of the 3,000 head of cattle benefits one person. A full consideration of the impacts of this grazing on the resource values including damage to ACECs such as Piute Springs, scenic values and wildlife habitat should be considered along with the assessment of a full range of alternatives.

The plan fails to consider the full range of alternatives and impacts form continued mineral extraction in the Scenic Area. Especially important are the ACECs such as the New York Mountains and Clark Mountains. While the plan recommends protective mineral withdrawals in specified areas, this clearly has not been a successful protective management alternative in the past.

The plan fails to consider the impacts from continued mechanized travel into environmentally sensitive areas such as wilderness study areas, washes, and dispersed use off of designated routes. The plan mentions specified controls on ATV use, however, it is silent on whether this limitation applies to motorcycles and 4-wheel drive vehicles. There is no indication as to when route closures mentioned in the plan would be effective and posted."

Response:

The Desert Plan and its attendant Environmental Impact Statement are the primary decision documents for management of the East Mojave. The Draft Desert Plan/EIS examined a broad range of alternatives for the East Mojave region, including a "protection" alternative recommending wilderness designation for most WSAs in the East Mojave. A protection sub-alternative also studied the East Mojave's suitability for National Park status. Other alternatives considered by the Desert Plan would have emphasized commodity extraction and development, and a "balanced" range of uses and protective measures. The Final Desert Plan decision on multiple use classes, wilderness recommendations, Scenic Area designation, Areas of Critical Environmental

Concern, grazing levels, and so forth leaned significantly towards the Protection Alternative.

The Scenic Area Plan is an update of the Desert Plan. It did not propose broad alternatives for management because that process was completed in 1980. Many of the actions will require Desert Plan Amendments and an environmental analysis review on a desert-wide perspective. Some actions have alternatives built into them, such as precise locations of hiking trails or camping areas, and will be decided at a later date, with public involvement.

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8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCRCC]
"Neither the proposed plan nor its no-action alternative adequately address concerns for the next ten years.

(1) A schedule for review of other plans for consistency with this plan is not included. Lack of foresight in completing this plan before ACEC plans and allotment management plans in the East Mojave will lead to increased work loads.

(2) The acquisition program to block up ownership is evaluated for its potential for encouraging large scale private development.

(3) We find the document inaccurate and that it has many internal discrepancies of fact. Especially, as indicated previously, between the section three Affected Environment and Chapter 5 part 3 Affected Environment. For example, the statistics on Wilderness Study Acres on page 150 are not the same as those presented in the table on page 110. We expect these inconsistencies to be eliminated in the next draft.

(4) It is absolutely inconceivable to us that one out of every two persons visiting the East Mojave does so to use a firearm. We wish to examine the methods used to estimate this use level. Did you count BLM Ranger patrols as users who hunt and shoot? College and university groups, organized tours, and foreign visitors described on page 151 and in more detail on p. 108 do not use firearms, and neither supports the conclusion on page 159 concerning the popularity of hunting and shooting.

(5) The effects of continuing casual collection of firewood has not been addressed. Dead wood is used by many other living creatures in the ecology before it is recycled to nutrients of use to the next generation of plants. It provides perches, insect homes, insect food sources for birds and small mammals, etc.

(6) The material on revising grazing allotments in the "Impacts on Wildlife Habitat" section implies a reduction in some allotments or AUMs, while the "Impacts on Livestock Grazing" does not mention this reduction. Which is it?

(7) The Livestock section implies that the number of areas open to shooting will reduce vandalism, but few of the water troughs and developments cited as subject to vandalism are in areas closed to shooting. There is no plan to improve the poor grazing lands to better condition.

(8) The evaluation of impacts on mining as a result of the acquisition program is inconsistent and commits mayhem on the resources which needed protection by acquisition in the first place. The acquisition program was not portrayed in section one as a minerals program.

a) If there is commercial mineral potential on the state lands, the probability is that the state will retain ownership, not trade to BLM.
b) Lands in the Fenner and Ivanpah Valleys were to be acquired to protect critical tortoise habitat and should not be opened to mineral extraction.
c) Lands on Cima Dome, and in other areas slated for withdrawal from mining should not have open enclaves in the newly acquired section.
d) Some of the lands would be within wilderness study areas which should not be open now, and will not be to new claims when designated as Wilderness by Congress.
e) Some of the lands are in ACECs where the reason for designating the ACEC was to protect the resource from negative impacts of mining.
f) Some of the acquisitions are to protect unique plant assemblages. That is inconsistent with mineral development.

If all acquisitions to protect these six categories were excluded from mineral development, as they should be, since they are being acquired to prevent development, very few acres would remain.

(9) Since state lands, Santa Fe Pacific (the primary private landowner) and other private lands are now open to mineral development the impact of acquisition by the federal government will be that the minerals will be given away to the first claimant rather than being sold or leased to the highest bidder as the state or any prudent landowner would do. This would result in a net decrease to the economy of the area from any commercially viable deposit. Since the BLM does not collect royalties on minerals there is no advantage to allowing mining on the newly acquired lands.

(10) The no-action alternative analysis should include reference to ALL management actions which SHOULD occur anyway under the existing Desert Plan, which is what would guide management in the absence of this plan. Future funding for both the Desert Plan and this plan will have the single greatest effect on the difference between the proposed plan and the Desert Plan and define what will really happen under the no-action alternative.

(11) The impact of the EMNSA designation was NOT included in the Desert Plan, since it was added after assessment was completed. The assessments in this document of even a limited number of impacts under Desert Plan management indicate, as we have been saying, that the Desert Plan does not provide controls for current use level adequate to protect visual, wildlife and cultural resources, much less those expected under the Scenic Area designation.

(12) Note that camping allowances after Congress designates Wilderness in the East Mojave may be quite different than the 300 feet which BLM now allows, since Congress may set other set-backs or run boundaries essentially along the roads allowing no camping, if it chooses to do so."

Response:

(1) ACEC and Allotment Management Plans were prepared based on material contained in the Desert Plan and the Management Philosophy Statement for the Scenic Area. These two documents were also the primary documents which directed the development of the Scenic Area Management Plan. The Scenic Area plan for the most part is consistent with previous planning efforts; where consistency was not possible, the Scenic Area Plan amends or updates the earlier plans.

(2) Private lands would be blocked up outside the Scenic Area. The driving force behind some exchanges will certainly be to consolidate private lands for a business venture. Potential impacts to a region would be assessed in the environmental document prepared for each exchange. The Scenic Area plan makes the point that large scale private developments should not occur inside the East Mojave. Until specific exchanges are proposed, no further statements can be made about impacts.

(3) The Final Plan has been corrected.

(4) Law enforcement officers were not included as "users." The East Mojave has been a very popular area for hunting and firearm use for decades: the 50% estimate was agreed on by all personnel surveyed, including employees of other agencies.

(5) Comment noted. The Final Plan proposes steps to discourage, but not eliminate, the casual collection of dead and down wood for campfires.

(6) Impacts to wildlife can be reduced by means other than reductions in the number of cattle grazing an area. Selective fencing and improving access to waters are two examples.

(7) Vandalism is an enforcement issue, and has been addressed as such in the Final Plan. The one section of "poor" grazing lands (see Table 2-6, page 119, draft plan) refers to the poor grazing conditions, not that the area is overgrazed. The Allotment Management Plan will propose actions to change the species composition to something more suitable for cattle and wildlife.

(8) The Final Plan clarifies BLM's policy on opening up acquired lands to mineral entry. Generally, lands in areas proposed for mineral withdrawals will not be opened to mineral entry until final decisions are made on wilderness designations and withdrawals.

(9) Transfer of private lands to public ownership may encourage mineral development, since a claimant owns the minerals he locates on public lands. Even though BLM does not collect royalties on locatable minerals, the national interests is nevertheless served by the extraction of minerals.

(10) The "no action" alternative was prepared to include actions mandated by previous planning efforts, including the Desert Plan.

(11) The designation of the East Mojave as a National Scenic Area in itself does not create impacts which should have been assessed in the Desert Plan. The Desert Plan EIS did assess expected impacts to the area based on multiple

use classes and resource allocations made by the Final Desert Plan.

(12) Management of wilderness areas will conform to Congressional guidelines. The Scenic Area Plan's proposals for camping are stricter than current allowances.

Impacts on Recreation Management

263 [Gerald Scherba, Desert Studies Consortium]
"There appears not to be a section titled Impacts on Desert Study and Research. Yet, this is acknowledged to be an activity conducted by a significant number of visitors to the Scenic Area. We recommend that such a section be included."

Response:

A section has been added to the Environmental Assessment as requested.

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8 [Judy Anderson, Sierra Club-SCROC]
"While [touting] the traditional use of the area for grazing, the more obvious question of impacts from possible developments of riding stables or dude ranches is not addressed."

Response:

BLM is not proposing the development of dude ranches, which would at any rate be on private lands and be regulated by County and State agencies. If such an operation wishes to make use of adjacent public lands, impacts will be assessed in an EA prepared specifically for that proposal.

Impacts on Vehicle Use

161 [Steve Kuehl, Phantom Duck Club]
"We disagree with the statement that "the net impact will be minor" and the statement "elimination of ATV's will have a moderate adverse impact ... and the closure of nonapproved washes will not have severe adverse impacts on vehicle use...". We would like you to document why this will not have these impacts.

We feel if this closure criteria is supportable, the infrequently used non-motorized trails should also be closed to eliminate the costs associated with their maintenance."

Response:

The EA has been revised to reflect changes made in the final plan concerning the use of ATVs. The policy on washes has also been revised. Since the plan calls for BLM to work closely with user groups in designating washes required for access, specific impacts on users can be resolved or moderated.

Impacts on Visual Resource Management
Impacts on Wilderness Values and Management
Impacts on Archaeological and Historical Resources
Impacts on Vegetation

Please refer to comments/responses on these management issues under the appropriate headings above for Part 2 of the Management Plan.

Impacts on Wildlife Habitat

283 [Glenn Stewart, Desert Tortoise Council]
"We request that you reevaluate the Alternative to sharply curtail or eliminate livestock grazing in the East Mojave Scenic Area. We request that you draw on all available data from the Southwest on tortoise declines in similar habitats, and the relationships to long-term overgrazing. We believe that there is substantial information relating declines to overgrazing. For example, new information is emerging on malnutrition and declines in tortoise populations in Utah, very probably due to long-term overgrazing."

Response:

Livestock use is not synonymous with overgrazing. There is ample evidence that shows that the East Mojave has not been overgrazed in many years. Information on the desert tortoise and its habitat requirements will be used as it becomes available.

Impacts on Livestock Grazing

225 [Jeffrey Opkepke, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service]
"The Service disagrees with the Bureau's contention that the benefits associated with grazing outweigh the negative impacts. The deleterious affects of cattle on soils, vegetative diversity, springs and certain wildlife species, such as desert tortoises and bighorn sheep, are well documented. The loss of "old-west character" could be easily replaced by increased wildlife values and explained at interpretive displays. Spring improvements and watering areas could most likely be maintained through some sort of cooperative agreement among conservation and hunting groups, the Bureau, and the California Department of Fish and Game. We encourage the Bureau to reconsider this action and initiate a program to phase out grazing in the Scenic Area."

Response:

When improperly managed, grazing can cause significant negative impacts on the resources mentioned. These effects can be largely avoided or mitigated through careful range management. The maintenance of wildlife waters through cooperative agreements with private groups and the Department of Fish and Game has been tried in the past, with mixed success. Efforts in this direction have already redoubled and will continue to increase, but they cannot completely replace the work done by the grazing lessees to develop and maintain water sources.

Impacts on Mineral Development

11 [Orlo Anderson, Kaiser Steel]
"Acquisition by the BLM of approximately 126,000 acres of land within the Scenic Area is expected to have a "positive overall impact on mineral development." Any positive effect that acquisitions may have is certainly reduced by the percentage of acquired acres that occupy the alluvial-filled valleys in the area, thereby not constituting prospecting sites. Considering the negative impact of huge wilderness withdrawals, mineral withdrawals, and the effects of other devices available to the BLM to limit minerals development against any minuscule positive impacts that the draft plan may contain, the net effect of plan upon future mining opportunities in the East Mojave will be devastating."

6 [Margaret Allender, California Mining Association]
"The management plan proposes to exclude more than 100,000 acres from mineral development and to dramatically increase operating restrictions on virtually all the remaining acreage in the scenic area by changing land use designations from "M" to "L".

Such actions greatly increase the time and cost of exploring for minerals — which already is an exorbitantly expensive undertaking. Also, such restrictions unnecessarily impose restraints on exploration activities, which are not justifiable in terms of environmental impacts, and increase the environmental assessment processes affecting start-up of operations.

There is little evidence, as suggested on page 169, that acquisition of private lands for possible future mineral entry would compensate for withdrawals covering 100,000 acres.

Rather, mineral entry on such lands is outlined as at least a two-step procedure which does not guarantee access. There is little likelihood that privately-held acreages hold the mineral potential to offset the loss to society of the withdrawals outlined in this draft plan. As private landholders have more latitude for mineral development, it may be suggested that such activities already would be underway on properties with promise.

Similarly, offers to exchange properties for those minerals producers which hold vested rights in the area fail to acknowledge the difficulties of securing properties for exchange which offer the same mineral significance.

The time and access offered through the "no action" alternative promises significant — and not "negligible" benefits as indicated on page 175 — to the region and the nation from increased mining activity in the East Mojave Scenic Area.

Indeed, such an analysis casts a question on the entire mining portion of this document. There is no explanation of the rationale that land withdrawals "will go forward at any rate" nor is there apparently significant understanding of the mining industry to recognize that time translates into a very quantifiable expense in a mineral development project. Several additional areas in the document deserve scrutiny. As the document is environmentally-focused, why is a differentiation drawn between locatable and leasable operations in the Clark

Mountains? If the Bureau intends to operate in good faith with the minerals industry, it should not suggest using Mining Law provisions to further limit mineral opportunities in the region. If it does not intend to use such provisions to that end, we would suggest that there is virtually no difference in an environmental sense between leasable and locatable minerals operations."

Response:

BLM concurs that adoption of the management plan will lead to increased expense for some operators, and increased time to obtain necessary approvals. These constraints already exist for most mining operations in the Scenic Area, and have proven reasonable--the cost of doing business in an area exceptionally rich in "competing" resources.

Because detailed mineral surveys have not been conducted for many areas in the East Mojave, no one can say with certainty how acquisition of private lands would affect mineral development. Some of the acquired lands would be in areas proposed for wilderness designation and/or mineral withdrawals. Alluvial filled valleys may contain placer deposits which can be economically recovered by current technologies.

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47 [George Byers, Santa Fe-Pacific Minerals Corporation]
"The final Plan must assess the impact of mining within the EMNSA. It must also assess impacts to, access to, or mining on private lands, should these private lands not be exchanged because of their mineral potential and be subjected to more strenuous regulatory restrictions that may be imposed upon mineral operations in the EMNSA.

Further, Santa Fe Pacific believes it is essential to provide a more detailed analysis of the two alternatives of not acquiring and acquiring the private land and mineral interests in the EMNSA. The former would assess the impact of the EMNSA's scenic values of potential mineral or other development on those lands. The latter would include at least an analysis of the availability of other BLM lands for exchange, the costs associated with such exchanges, and the cost of direct purchase if exchanges are not feasible. Not only do we believe that this analysis is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), but it is also consistent with the similar recommendations recently made by the GAO in its recent report entitled "Federal Land Management: Nonfederal Land and Mineral Rights Could Impact Future Wilderness Areas" (June 1987).

Impacts to private property rights may be significant if, as has been pointed out above, the BLM has insufficient unencumbered and geologically acceptable acreage to exchange with private land and mineral owners. In this regard, the final Plan should address whether acre-for-acre exchanges are possible within California, and alternative strategies, such as the identification of surplus GSA property for exchange."

Response:

Impacts to/from mining in the East Mojave region were addressed in a general sense in the Environmental Impact Statement accompanying the Desert Plan in 1980. The management plan will not have an effect on private land mineral development, since BLM does not manage such activity on those lands unless the surface is privately owned and the mineral estate is publicly owned; such ownership patterns do not exist in the East Mojave.

The issue of private land acquisition and mineral development can not be addressed specifically because, at this stage, BLM does not know what private or state owned parcels will be available for acquisition. When exchanges are proposed, a separate Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared describing resources and impacts on both the public lands to be given up and the private/state lands to be acquired by BLM. Mineral values will be factored into the appraisal on which the exchange is based.

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